# THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

## ANNA ROBESON BURR

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By Anna Robeson Burr

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THE JESSOP BEQUEST. With frontispiece. 12mo, $1.50.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

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## A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY

BY

ANNA ROBESON BURR

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1909

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*Published October 1909*

# PREFACE

No one will deny that the pleasure of writing such a book as this depends very largely on one's experience of libraries and of librarians. In this respect, the writer has been not a little fortunate. To Mr. George Maurice Abbot, Mr. Knoblauch, and staff, of the Philadelphia Library, and to Dr. Morris Jastrow, Miss Gawthorp, and staff, of the Library of the University of Pennsylvania her thanks are due, first and foremost, in the warmest measure. There has not been a moment during the entire journey when her most unreasonable demands have not been met with cheerfulness, and she has been urged upon her way with books in every language. The names of these institutions, and of their benign directors, are surely to be found engraven upon her heart. Other debts there are to be acknowledged. Thanks are due Mr. Bunford Samuel for his special aid in search through the hoarded riches of the Loganian. The writer turns also with gratitude to Dr. Francis B. Gummere, of Haverford College, who knows so well how to communicate to the student the spirit of his enthusiasm and his ideals. As for that best friend, who has been ever at hand to aid, whether to encourage or

to restrain; who has never lacked conviction, — to him, indeed, the debt is one the writer would not discharge if she could. It represents but part of an increasing burden of obligation, under which she is joyfully content to rest.

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# THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

## PART I

# THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY:

## A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

Reasons for undertaking an inquiry into any department of literature are not far to seek; it were perhaps banal to dwell upon them. Upon most of us the literary and personal charm of the memoir and the autobiography has long laid hold. Any aspect of the human creature has its poignant interest. But only as chance willed, in the hurried moments of choice upon a library shelf, have we now and again found an acquaintance or gained a friend. The attempt in the following pages has been, first of all, to carry the reader more easily into the midst of a broad and general society. With him we have planned to meet a number of interesting men and women of high and low degree, of many professions and occupations; and the significant thing is that we are to meet them just as we would meet them in life. Under the same impressions, and with the same reticences; with the same small graces, poses and insincerities, such as tend to vanish as we become better

acquainted, we shall meet them; and yet always with that one privilege, which life itself might not have granted us, the opportunity to make them our friends. This the printed page has done for them and us; this is, after all, the one clear benefit of their having written their lives for us, that they have thus perpetuated our opportunity, so that death has not deprived us of a friend.

Here we may choose friendship as we should choose it in life, you one, I another; you Augustin, let us say, and I Alfieri. And it is in order that you may meet your friend, from whom business, environment, or the irritating futilities of the card-catalogue, have separated you hitherto; that you may not pass through the world without him any longer, that these pages have, first of all, been written.

That a thoughtful observer of people should tend to make comparisons of individual character and thus draw his conclusions as to the laws underlying human nature, is almost a truism to the sociologist. As one advances in the study of autobiography, as document after document lies before one, as acquaintances multiply and friend after friend is made, the importance to science, the value to psychology, of such a self-revelation of humanity, is brought home to the most unscientific of literary students. Perceptions of certain truths become inevitable; the logic of certain conclusions carries its own force. And, as he reads, the

student seems to become a passive spectator rather than an active enquirer. So, at least, has it been with the present writer. A task begun in the enthusiastic spirit of pure friendliness, with some wish, perhaps, of providing congenial readers with a sort of *catalogue raisonné* of the more important and agreeable memoirs, has developed wider hopes. Details concerning many of these matters which to-day especially occupy the psychologists' attention, were found in abundance, and, having been found, tended to comment upon or to confirm one another. The obscure and important questions of the subjective tendency in private history, of the standards of sincerity, and of the relative value of the deliberate self-study and the unconscious self-revelation, offered themselves as novel and fascinating paths for the reader's foot; and the fact that no authoritative statements have previously been made upon the subjective autobiography, has acted as a challenge.

Many writers have been critics or commentators upon the personal record, many have had that partiality for the memoir "which in me amounts to a passion," as John Addington Symonds[1] has declared it. That Symonds was aware of the work to be done in this field is shown by the incomparable distinction and accuracy of his translations, and by his passing reference to the "case of misinterpreted observation," in Cellini, to

[1] Introduction to the Memoirs of Carlo Gozzi.

which we shall again refer. But our obligations to him end there. No writer has shown a keener sense of the friendliness of the memoir, yet of the possibilities underlying a comparative study of such documents, he is unaware. In the same manner we find the idea of comparative study wholly absent from the work of that Frenchman who shared the passion, and who pursued the *mémoire* during his literary life with all the hunter's and collector's ardor. We mean, of course, Sainte-Beuve. No reader of the *Causeries* or of the *Nouveaux Lundis* needs to be reminded of the proportion of such books discussed therein. In works of reference the phrase "Consulter Ste.-Beuve" is, again and again, the only bibliographical note. Yet, Sainte-Beuve never lays those cases side by side with a view to any comparison of the individual, or to any definite line of investigation. The same points do not recur to him in succession during each critique; his analyses, undertaken from different aspects, might often lead one wrongly to suppose the objects wholly deficient in points of contact. With all his great allusiveness, direct comparisons are, broadly speaking, few. Each essay is separate and complete; it carries all the force and exercises all the fascination due to this critical and exclusive treatment. No one can doubt that the value of Sainte-Beuve's work is increased by his ability to give himself up, in entire sympathy, to one subject at a time; but it is necessary to dwell upon the fact in

explanation of what would otherwise seem *vieux jeu*. His name is the foremost, and rightly, to occur to anyone opening a book which professes to treat of the *mémoire*, domestic, historical, or religious, who, therefore, would be inclined to greet the attempt with a disconcerting "why?"

Why, then, the critical work of such writers as Symonds and Sainte-Beuve does not forestall the object of the present study, — and it has not done so in any particular, — is a question to be reasonably satisfied before one proceeds further. In the first place, there was much less temptation to the critic of the early nineteenth century, to utilize his material as an aid to science. We forget, so rapidly do we assimilate results, that psychology, as we now know it was not then in being to jog Sainte-Beuve's elbow with a constant appeal to workers in all these fields for more facts. The suggestiveness of the modern psychological laboratory was wholly lacking to the historian and the antiquarian. There was no more than a hint that along certain lines criticism might approach research. Had there been, no doubt the deepest-dyed *littérateur* would have seen the opportunity afforded by this mass of various commentary. That Sainte-Beuve has not done so, is of use as a reminder of the youth of the whole tendency. So entirely has modern psychology revolutionized the teaching of what used to be called metaphysics, that one forgets this science is hardly fifty years old.

It is natural that all science should begin at the beginning; the child and the savage have received hitherto the major part of the psychologist's attention. Recently there has been a sporadic outburst of interest in man as he is at the very latest moment, with theoretical explanations of his present condition and theoretical forecasts of his future tendency. The work of Nordau, Lombroso, and others, belongs to this class, as do certain late sociological and pathological studies. But, as a whole, the evolution of modern man, — of man, that is, since he has assumed the civilized aspect with which we are familiar, and the mental and emotional development which we may regard with respect, — has been very scantily handled. There are cogent reasons for this neglect.

"The formation of the mental constitution of a people," says Gustave Le Bon,[1] "does not demand, as does the creation of animal species, those geological periods whose immense duration defies calculation. Still, the time it demands is considerable." The variations during a lapse of ten centuries, in what Le Bon further terms[2] "the congeries of sentiments, ideas, tendencies, and beliefs, which form the soul of a collectivity of men," may be slight and of narrow range, as a whole, but at times, as he also points out, they may be very rapid and very far-reaching. We have all experienced the shock which this fact makes apparent in the

[1] "Psychologie des Peuples," pp. 11, 12. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.

pages of certain books; and we all realize the difficulty of studying such variations from trustworthy sources. Evidently, a chief source of study must be the individual; and, if so, the great question of sincerity, of the reliability of personal testimony, is here to be faced at the outset. Moreover, the statistician distrusts a study of the individual. Quetelet's work, *On Man*, written in 1835, is definite on this head, declaring that the study of the individual does not permit a proper conception of general laws. Individual man, he thinks, must be regarded only as a fraction of the species, and any personal idiosyncrasies must be eliminated in order to arrive at general results. Francis Galton, working with composite photographs and statistics of family groups, arrived at much the same opinion; yet there is a suggestive point of view in Cousin's remark [1] that he regards the *important individual* as the essence of his epoch. "Give me the series of great men," Cousin says practically, "and I will tell you the history of the race; because history is best represented by important individuals." Candolle, in his *Histoire des Sciences et des Savants depuis deux Siècles*,[2] alludes directly to the immense value of and the general interest in the autobiography. The delicate points of selection and reliability will always, he thinks, make it difficult to choose testimony; a difficulty which seems insuperable to the reader plunging, without guide

[1] Quoted by Quetelet, "Sur l'Homme," p. 281. [2] Page 13.

or standard, into an indiscriminate mass of personal documents.

We now see clearly the attitude of the statistician, and can readily comprehend that he offered no suggestions to the literary critic, writing at the time of Sainte-Beuve, to regard his work from any other than the literary standpoint. But the feeling has changed; and we find M. Ribot insisting on the value of *mémoires* as data, and even comparing them to the laboratory experiment which inspires such unshakeable faith.

"L'évolution des sentiments," he asserts, "dans le temps et l'espace, à travers les siècles et les races, est un laboratoire qui opère depuis les millions d'années, sur les millions d'hommes, et dont la valeur documentaire n'est pas médiocre. Ce sera pour la psychologie une grande perte de négliger ces documents." [1]

Not only does M. Ribot make these general statements, but he does not hesitate to use concrete examples. In his *Essai sur l'Imagination Créatrice,* he suggests the value of collating such details as the *bizarreries* of inventors, the idiosyncrasies of poets or painters during inspiration, in order that we may intimately penetrate their individualities. And he intimates that a systematic classification of such data is necessary before we commit ourselves to the pathological view of genius, as some of his fellow-scientists have done.

He, himself, on such a point as the effect on the im-

[1] "Psych. des Sentiments," pp. 195, 196.

agination during puberty, instances the visionary lady-love of the youthful Chateaubriand described in the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*. But even to so cultured a scientist as M. Ribot, the task of finding valuable matter in this heterogeneous mass would be tedious, if not impossible. "They manage these things better in France," it is true; but even in France there appears to be no systematic and satisfactory bibliography of *mémoires*. Under our present cataloguing system in the libraries, no means exist of finding what important persons have written of themselves and what their writings are worth, save by an actual shelf-to-shelf hunt. Is your psychologist going to pause in his work on generalization to make this shelf-to-shelf hunt? Not while he has possible material in the shape of modern personal witnesses, together with sheets of general statistics. And, yet, if we believe, with M. Cousin, that the great man represents the quintessence of his epoch, an autobiography possesses the strong advantage of superior quality. A sincere, full autobiography is not written save by an important man; and, in truth, one of the tokens of his importance is the seriousness that such a work appears to have for him. The quality of our witness, therefore, as against the quantity of the statistician, is our first claim; the ore from this mine must assay to a certain degree of value. For the historical element of the historical commentary, or *mémoire*, this has been successfully undertaken. Who

writes of Louis XIV without Saint-Simon, of mediæval Rome without Ammianus Marcellinus? For years the objective record has furnished material to the historian. There lie in the subjective record equally as many data for the psychologist. If it is true, as Quetelet asserts, that man is tending toward a common type; that the oscillation of his elements is becoming less and less extreme, then the comparative study of individuals in the past furnishes us with an immense illumination on the subject of character. Into this unmapped field of autobiography we are about to enter. If we would not wander aimlessly, the material must submit itself to an attempt at classification.

## CHAPTER II

### CLASSIFICATION AND THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INTENTION

All literary records are of unequal value, and while they are being sifted they must also be judged. Mention must be made at once of that which may be unreservedly eliminated. If we repeat and emphasize the ideal of friendship, it is not only because there is no friend like your autobiographer, but also because only by keeping it before one's mind will the limitations of this study be wholly understood. The scandalous memoir, written for an ulterior purpose, apart from any revelation of human life, has but a negligible value to us here. So also is it with the teeming thousands of commonplace, modern imitations, from which is absent every trace of serious intent. The cases remaining must conform to a certain standard, must establish, as it were, their right to be heard, ere their testimony can be accepted. For the whole value of personal testimony lies in the quality of the witness, and the special danger attending the study of self-revelation lies in treating all self-revealers alike, in giving an equal weight to all. In the treatment of the religious confession this fact has been more often forgotten, just where it should have been most often remembered.

There are definite, positive reasons why the religious confession increases in value by a regular progression for every century that we go back into the past. The Quaker journal of 1650 is worth more to us than the Methodist journal of 1750; the mediæval chronicle of 1400–1500 still more; and the work of Augustin, of Paulinus, most of all. The nearer we approach to the source of an emotion, the more fresh, the more vital is the creative impulse it inspired.

When that which was a fresh and vital creative impulse has become a mere fashion in writing, one cannot deny that its value as evidence is lowered. This is reason enough why it were a waste of time to attempt a study of all the ephemeral issues in autobiographical form during the last hundred years. "The Lights and Shadows of my Pastorate" type of record, so common in the '50s, has been merely turned over and allowed to resume its slumber undisturbed upon the dusty shelf of the library. It has been likewise with the narratives of travellers, showmen, conjurers, — P. T. Barnum, Signor Blitz, and others, — whose aim is merely to set forth certain actions in unfamiliar fields, and who furnish us with nothing of their minds and characters. Some modern documents, of course, such as Herbert Spencer and Mrs. Oliphant, tower head and shoulders above the ruck of cheap egotisms, like giant trees above a secondary growth; and these have been fully considered. Records of to-day have been freely used

to point a contrast, to illustrate a comparison; but the attempt at a thorough survey of subjective study does not go beyond the beginning of the nineteenth century. The reader may be sure that the omission of a work simply means that it contains no definite matter worth noting in the following pages, and for this same reason there have been included one or two works apparently otherwise negligible.

When one chooses a friend between the deliberate covers of a book, he is chosen for some salient or appealing quality. Propinquity, the worldly jostle, reasons of policy, have no effect on the relation. And it is partly for this reason — although only *partly* — that the whole of that class recognized as the frankly-scandalous it has seemed wiser to omit. No doubt some student, of a stronger stomach than the present writer, will one day examine comparatively such famous examples as de Choisy, Lauzun, Casanova, and their no less famous imitators, Faublas, du Bois, du Tilly, down through the spurious phases of this mode, to the so-called *Mémoires* of Ninon de l'Enclos, Mesdames du Barri and Lamotte-Valois, and give us his conclusions on the curious psychology of erotics. It is a book for the clinic, which will some day be written. Meanwhile, guided by our hopes of friendship, our rules are those which govern any broad and intelligent society. In the event of a personal introduction to M. de Lauzun, or M. le Comte Jacques de Casanova de Seingalt, should we be likely

to broach, during our chat, the subject of their *bonnes fortunes?* Topics there are more interesting, and, moreover, it would imply a certain degree of intimacy. And do we really wish to be intimate with M. de Lauzun, or M. de Casanova? Most of us, it may be said without contradiction, would choose our friends elsewhere. Unfortunately, these ladies and gentlemen have so little to give us.

This is to be noted especially when one comes to the greater self-students, who, vices and all, are so eminently worthy of friendship. For this omission is not a question of the proprieties, but rather of what is worth while. There may be an evil side to many great lives; the vices and appetites of a vital nature must not be left out in any estimate of that nature's development. The less worthy part of our friend may occupy our attention so long as it is but a part. If, in unveiling the darker corners of his life, he is moved by sincerity, by the deep-rooted desire to appear as he really is, an entire creature; then it is as an entire creature we must study him, omitting nothing. But the moment his vice becomes his major topic, dwelt on with enjoyment, and written to give enjoyment to creatures like himself, then he forthwith passes out of our hands into those of the pathologist. We do not go to the sanitarium in quest of friendship, although we may loyally accompany our friend thither, once we have come to know and love him when he was well. A man's

attitude toward his own evil, so vital, so explanatory, is a potent factor in determining his standing for all time. Rousseau draws perilously near condemnation by it; if he escapes, it is because of the sheer lifting-power of his peculiar genius. One cannot help wondering if the autobiography of Byron, which Moore destroyed, might not have cast a final light, by its attitude in this regard, on that protean character.

Before we begin our attempt at a necessary classification, it will be well to glance for a moment at certain varieties of autobiographical writing which have a particular tendency, or a special significance. The field is so wide, its characteristics so diverse, that a simple and elastic grouping of what is surveyed becomes necessary in order that the methods of the student shall be understood. For instance, autobiography in the form of fiction, while not deserving of an especial study, cannot be wholly ignored. Cases of this class readily occur to the mind. Alfred de Musset's *Confessions d'un Enfant du Siècle* is a well-known example; also the curious *Mémoires de Madame d'Épinay* (which we shall later find valuable on another count); and the celebrated *Mémoires du Seigneur de Fleurange*, called *Le Jeune Aventureux*, which are his own work, although he makes use of the third person. The historical commentary of Jacques Auguste de Thou represents another variation; in it he uses the first person, whereas in his *Vita Sua* he uses the third.

Both of these works are written with an historical object. De Thou seems to be *editing* his own work by transposition to the third person; and his example has been followed, much to our regret, by other laborious editors, who seem to fancy that they have dignified a personal memoir by this transformation. The learned Dr. Edmund Calamy has done this for *Richard Baxter's Life of Himself.* It is an infallible way to lend an air of utter untrustworthiness to the case; but it is not the only wrong the self-student has had to suffer at the hands of the editor. Because a man writes of himself it appears to be taken for granted he knows nothing of the subject; his work is ruthlessly condensed, transposed, and cut, without acknowledgment, and thus often presents a wholly one-sided view. Mr. W. D. Howells sins almost beyond pardon in this respect in his series of *Great Autobiographies,* which should be valuable. The omissions in the case of Herbert of Cherbury, to take a single instance, would lead one to overlook all that curious and significant candor with which Herbert explains his attitude toward marital faithfulness, an attitude so illuminative of his type of mind. But even Mr. Howells, hard as it is to forgive the loss of time and trust betrayed, — even Mr. Howells is not so trying as those children and grandchildren who gayly edit the autobiographies of their parents. The honest toiler's heart sinks within him at the mere sight of those words on the title-page, "edited by his son."

He knows that he will come upon the statement that only "matters of interest to the public" have been retained; that all family and private matters have been omitted. He is lucky if the omission goes no further. The editor is apt to fear to wound the feelings of some extant third cousin, and so has cut out the personal description; or has found his progenitor tedious in details as to his constitution, methods of work, personal habits, dreams, and what not, and so has firmly excised them. Bare, garbled, bereft, the document lies before us, shorn of the rich minutiæ which might have given material to the psychologist, suggestions to the sociologist, or aid to the imagination in forming a picture of the past. Surely it is not for one close to the biographer to determine his value, and a reader will always prefer to do his own skipping. We can only be thankful that Jerome Cardan's children were too ignorant to lay hands on the *De Vita Propria Liber*.

The memoir as fiction and the memoir transposed by another hand, walk the paths of autobiography, loitering, to use a police phrase, in a suspicious manner. Enwrapped as they are in veils and disguises, one has to be particularly careful as to identification before using their material. For this reason they are more subtly dangerous than the frankly spurious class. The spurious autobiography is the refuge of both the sciolist and the literary charlatan. Once thrown upon life, difficult to avow, impossible to recall, it lurks about

the decent society of books like some base-born adventurer, communicating evil and distrust. In the past its examples followed n the footsteps of the scandalous and salable volume. The literature of roguery is full of the spurious confession. Henry Vaux, thief and forger, Captain Thomas Ashe, who dedicated his performance to Lord Byron, both bear internal evidence of deliberate manufacture. Any one chancing upon those *mémoires* bearing the names of le comte de Rochefort, J. B. la Fontaine, le marquis de Montbrun, la marquise de Fresne, le comte de Vordan, la Feuillade, or le chevalier de Rohan, knows that he has before him one of the innumerable forgeries of the ingenious Courtilz de Sandraz et de Vergé, to whom also we owe the immortal d'Artagnan. Somewhat higher in the scale of fraudulency is the careful volume forged out of a mosaic of letters and anecdotes in the manner of a period, like a piece of furniture or a tiara of Saïtaphernes. It is often so vivaciously done that it appears to be real; and indeed serves the same purpose, by imparting an air of culture to the boudoirs of the wealthy.

Not the commercially but the seriously spurious memoir, it is so hard to forgive. When the original circumstance of its writing is forgotten, it becomes listed under biography in the libraries. In another generation some one stumbles unaware upon the autobiography of Abraham Lincoln, let us say, gets it down in a fine glow of surprised reverence, wastes an hour reading it,

only to be finally exasperated by the printed lie. One might suppose that a sense of humor, if not of reverence, would prevent a writer's giving occasion for so much malediction. That ingenious lunatic who, in 1857, published the *Autobiography of Jesus Christ* deserves, on the other hand, rather to be classed with those mediæval heralds who designed coat-armor and escutcheons for Adam and Eve.

When we come to consider autobiography from the beginning, it must be remembered that the term *mémoire* is exceedingly loose, and in no sense a definition. Only in recent times has it come to have a personal, much less a biographical significance. Beaumarchais' *Mémoires* are a series of legal tracts or briefs. Used in its major sense of record, we find "memoirs" on sugar and corn, on decrees and historical events. In a personal sense a *mémoire* may be the life of a man by himself, or by some one else, or written in the first person wholly around a second person, and secondarily, if at all, autobiographical. Such is Sully's *Les Économies royales et les Servitudes loyales*, which is a *mémoire*, written in the first person by Sully's secretaries from his dictation, dedicated to Henri IV, concerning Henri IV, and with the object of rousing that monarch's tardy gratitude by a statement of what had been accomplished. The manner is autobiographical, but neither the matter nor the purpose. Many court *mémoires* are written about the monarch or some court-figure, and contain nothing auto-

biographical whatever except the first person. Several of these are in the Louis XIV group, — Madame de Motteville's for instance; and they constitute the Napoleonic, for such as those of Dumouriez, Grouchy, Ney, Lavalette, Fouché, Marmont, Talleyrand, Rovigo, Rapp, Rimini, Bourrienne, Marbot, are avowedly written for or against or about that great central figure.

The function of these narratives, which we may broadly class as the objective, belongs primarily to history. It is the sense of aiding history which moves the pens of Madame de Motteville, Saint-Simon, Sully, d'Argenson. After a page or two of self-introduction, we find the writer's personality submerged in the event, and rising to the surface only when the event carries him there. The reason for writing furnished by these *mémoiristes* is clearly the historical influence. Saint-Simon states: —

"What I read of my own accord of history and above all of the personal memoirs of the time since François I, has bred in me the desire to write down what I might myself see."

The same avowedly historical purpose moves such salient figures as Cheverny, Comines, Villehardouin, Joinville, Pierre de l'Estoile, Richelieu, in France; Bishop Burnet, in England; Catherine II of Russia; and the Hindu emperors, Timur, Baber and Jahangir. History has long since made use of this material, which has furnished the indispensable and picturesque requisite

of an individual point of view. There is little for us to do in this work with what may be classed as objective memoirs.

But when we come to consider the equally large mass of documents to be classed broadly as subjective, we find ourselves upon uncharted seas. The rise and tendency of self-study remains to be analyzed, and ideas on the subject, for want of any comparative data, have been entirely vague.[1] The only type of subjective autobiography which has received any attention whatever at the hand of the scientist, is the religious confession, and that largely by way of illustration. As a special and important section of the subjective record, it will here receive separate classification and consideration. Of course, the subjective matter contained in objective documents has been used. Human personality is hard to down, and all memoir writers are not so consistent as Saint-Simon or d'Argenson. Sometimes a vigorous mind will turn itself inward for study, even without the wish to do so; and it is equally true that a very subjective intention may bring us only a barren record of political facts.

Nicholas de Neufville, Seigneur de Villeroy, in his *Mémoires d'Estat*, sets out with the observation: "Le plus grand contentement que puisse avoir un homme de bien, après celuy que luy rend sa conscience . . .

[1] Since these words were written the voluminous work of Professor Georg Misch, "Geschichte der Autobiographien," has been issued in its first volume.

est d'être tenu pour tel qu'il est . . . " a statement which appears to promise a study as subjective as Cardan's or Alfieri's. Instead of which we find a historical tract wherein he never mentions himself, and does not let us know what actions were his own, nor even which concerned him. On the other hand, Blaise de Monluc, in *Les Commentaires* declares that " Le plus grand capitaine qui ayt jamais esté, qui est César, m'en monstre le chemin," and gives one of the most minute and thorough pieces of self-study in existence, the most un-Cæsarian personal picture that ever professed the Roman for a model. To go to the document itself, therefore, in the face of these inconsistencies, is our only course; to gather and to collate such subjective data as the autobiographical impulse has caused the historian to insert, albeit unconsciously, in his narrative, since the gift of self-revelation may develop under the most unlikely forms. Classification cannot be made strictly according to the reason for writing, — although it may generally be so made, — but must remain elastic, to permit of a flexible passing from one division of the subject to another. Our concern lies with that mass of heterogeneous subjective data up to the present ungathered, unclassified, and unregarded. Here we are interested in what people have been, in what they have thought themselves and why, and in the methods by which they display the materials of their self-introspection.

What causes a man to write a study of himself which

shall truly reveal him? When we ask this question we strike at once into obscure deeps. Rousseau imagined: "Je forme une entreprise qui n'eut jamais d'exemple et dont l'exécution n'aura point d'imitateur." Both statements we now know to be rhetorical rather than true, for Rousseau had notable examples and has had notable imitators. Two hundred years earlier Cardan began his book with the following sentence: "Since among all the things which mankind has been given to follow there is nothing more worthy or pleasing than a knowledge of the truth . . . we have been led to write this book of our own life."

Benvenuto Cellini, a notable example of the same date, expresses his conviction that "all men of whatsoever quality they be, who have done anything of excellence, ought, if they are persons of truth and honesty, to describe their life with their own hands."

Here are two reasons as cogent and as valid as Rousseau's: "Si je ne vaux pas mieux, au moins je suis autre," which has usurped attention on this subject; and they must be emphasized, because Rousseau has stood so long as the one type of the subjective autobiographer that he positively hinders us from taking a broad view. His *Confessions* were written during a period of great individualism and self-affirmation, and they gave a crystallizing touch to the many tentative ideas of an age of theory. They were, moreover, permeated with emotion, an emotion expressed with the voice and accent of

genius; and the impression which they made was — if one may put it so — almost a *religious* impression. So entirely did they fill the skies at the time, that men forgot their idea was by no means original, — a revived literary mood rather than a fresh literary impulse.

The whole subjective idea has thus, because of Rousseau, been connected in our minds with the eighteenth century, and has received consideration as an expression of eighteenth-century moods and tendencies. To carry the reader back of Rousseau to the earlier manifestations of this impulse must be the first step; for a right understanding of the *Confessions* demands that they should be placed in their proper relative position toward other great self-studies.

There have been quoted above certain reasons for writing given by three marked and definite characters. A fuller comparative inquiry into such reasons will be found, together with other considerations on sincerity, in the chapter devoted to that purpose. But they cannot wholly escape mention here if the reason for writing one's own life springs from any recognizable psychological condition. The whole subject of self-observation is exceedingly obscure, and has been studied only in its abnormal manifestations. It has been difficult to find more than the most casual references to this intellectual condition. In a recent German treatise [1] there is the following suggestive paragraph:

[1] Otto Weiniger, "Sex and Character," p. 125.

"It will now be seen why (if neither vanity, desire for gossip nor imitation drives them to it) only the better men write down recollections of their lives; and how I perceive in this a strong evidence of the connection between memory and giftedness. It is not as if every man of genius wished to write an autobiography: the incitement to autobiography comes from special, very deep-seated psychological conditions."

Study of the reasons for writing autobiography would seem to throw some light upon these conditions. They form a part of Fichte's recommendation to the student in his introduction to *The Science of Knowledge*:[1] "Attend to thyself; turn thy glances away from all that surrounds thee and upon thine own innermost self. Such is the first demand which philosophy makes of its disciples. We speak of nothing that is without thee, but wholly of thyself."

Since this is philosophy's first demand of its disciples, we comprehend more clearly why an autobiography is so apt both to *precede* the mental changes in an intellect of the first order, and to *follow* them. The whole philosophical trend in such a mind moves in the direction of better self-understanding; the "attend to thyself" becomes an imperious command, acting upon a new and sensitive humility. A man says to himself something like this: "Behold, I understand nothing, not even myself. With what shall I begin, now that my desire for study is

[1] Benjamin Rand, "Modern Classical Philosophers."

aroused? With myself." And thus the conditions governing the incitement to autobiography are formed; serious conditions, as Fichte perceived, and indicative of the position of that man's mind toward philosophy at that time.

To the student, moreover, by acknowledging and defining a special, deep-seated psychological condition, further classification of this heterogeneous mass of records is made possible. One is thus enabled to separate the document written with a "desire for gossip or imitation" from that which is the outcome of a governed impulse which we have ventured to call the *autobiographical intention*. The weight and value of a case will be found in direct proportion to the exactness and the seriousness of its autobiographical intention. Vanity as an element in nullifying the value of a case is by no means established. Crude cases of vanity, such as Charlotte Charke, the Margravine of Anspach, the Abbé de Choisy, will remain, of course, unimportant; but to dissever the deep-seated, obscure vanity of the genuine self-student from his austere autobiographical intention, is well-nigh impossible. The whole question of subjectivity, with its mingled threads of egotism, vanity, and humility, remains a tangled skein for us. Even in its effect on the sincerity of a case, vanity cannot be accurately determined, for there are exceedingly vain autobiographers like James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, who have been minutely, exquisitely

sincere. The effect of vanity may lie in its proportion to the intellectual force of the self-student, just as certain chemical combinations must remain in solution or the combination cannot be maintained.

At the moment it were well to understand the limits of the autobiographical intention, since conformation to them is to be so largely our standard of value. The best definition obtainable is to be found in a case otherwise unimportant, the *Journal d'une Jeune Artiste* of Marie Bashkirtsev. As a book, its startling egotisms gave it a fleeting vogue, but its absence of simplicity, sensational style, and lack of mental and nervous balance render it as evidence completely nugatory; since, contrary to general opinion, it is not necessarily the emotional and neurotic person who becomes the noteworthy self-student. The curious thing about Marie Bashkirtsev is her extraordinary perception of the value of self-study, which gives a dignity to the sentences of her preface: "If I should not live long enough to become famous," she writes, "this journal will be interesting to psychologists. The record of a woman's life, written down day by day, without any attempt at concealment, *as if no one in the world were to read it, yet with the purpose of being read,* is always interesting. If this book is not the exact, the absolute, the strict truth, it has no raison d'être."

Like the living human being, the autobiographer must come to stand for what he is. So this young

woman's *exact, absolute, strict* truth simply shows her to us for what she was, an unbalanced neurasthenic. Yet in the italicized phrases she has furnished a definition of the autobiographical intention which it is impossible to better. It must be remembered in making an estimate of every document of this kind. Its two parts become the first and second canon for the classic autobiographer. Written "as if no one in the world were to read it," *i. e.*, with the utmost candor, is the first requisite; but it would apply to the diary as well, if it were not for the second canon, "yet with the purpose of being read." It is this purpose which adds to the impulse dignity and measure, and which, as we shall see, tends to establish and confirm its sincerity. This "purpose of being read" raises a merely evanescent mood of introspection to a point where it may generate power. The great pieces of self-study not only wholly fulfill these canons, but they are raised above the mediocre efforts of the same kind because they do so. We find Augustin, Cardan, Rousseau, Mill, Franklin, writing "as if no one in the world were to read it, yet with the purpose of being read."

Now that we are provided with a standard for our material, we are the better able to approach the material itself, asking not only what caused a man to write of himself, but when and under what influences did he begin to do so.

# CHAPTER III

## HISTORY

Since any historical survey, however brief, should have a starting-point, ours may be said, without fear of contradiction, to be the Christian era. No history of the subjective trend in literature appears to have been written;[1] its origins are complex and obscure and are ignored by students of the period during which it began. Throughout Gibbon's analysis of the influence which Christianity exercised upon Roman life, there is no mention of this element which it introduced into thought. Yet, lest the mind should take it for granted that in this case, as in many others, an apparently new literary movement is, in reality, an old forgotten one, we cannot emphasize too strongly that autobiography as we know it, and in its full sense, does not exist before Christ. If there is one fact which history succeeds in making completely convincing, one broad difference which it underlines as dividing our intellectual life from the intellectual life of elder civilizations, it is their comparative objectivity. This difference separates the ancient world from the modern as tangibly as a wall or a ditch. It has been stated and approached in a hundred

[1] The appearance of Professor Georg Misch's first volume would seem to require some modification of this statement.

ways: from the philosophical, literary and artistic points of view. It has been mentioned as evidence of youth; as evidence of a barbaric and warlike period; as evidence of the influence of the agricultural stage of man's development. We find the objectivity of early art, literature, and thought insisted on by every historian of these subjects. In religion the keynote of the ritual is command and exhortation as to act and deed. The Old Testament and the New, laid side by side, afford the most striking proof of this change of ideal. Poetry, also, Dr. Gummere says, "Poetry begins with the impersonal, with communal emotion." [1]

Individualism, of course, is a later development in literature. The early Biblical writings were communal; any one was at liberty to add to an existing narrative, to interpolate his own ideas and variations, as is seen in the books of Genesis and Job. Individualism must invariably precede any subjective trend; and thus it is comparatively late that we find pieces of literary work signed and accredited to some given author.

In the earlier narratives of history — and it is history which comes nearest to the personal memoir — it is a matter of literary etiquette to keep the objective point of view completely in mind. It did not seem to Herodotus or Xenophon that their personal attitude held any interest for the reader. The whole literary tradition and equipment of the Greek turned him away from

[1] "The Beginnings of Poetry."

introspection; his preference for the imaginative in literature kept his eye upon the outside world. This does not mean that in occasional scattered pieces of writing one may not find an unconscious subjective spirit. It is strong in certain pages of Plato, whose "Know thyself," indeed, would seem to refute us, were it not preceded by the command, "Do thine own work." The great religious reformers before Christ contain detached passages and religious moods of great subjectivity, as all religious leaders must. But never, in any consecutive manner, does Plato, or Confucius, or Buddha, or any other leader or reformer before Jesus Christ suggest that what a man *is*, is more important than what he *does;* or that duty obliges him to study himself with care and candor, that by such study he may assist other blind creatures like himself.

"O miseras hominum mentes! O pectora cæca!" cries Lucretius; and the lament has a poignancy the more readily understood.

The past, however, contains the seed of the present, as well as those favorable influences which cause it to spring into leaf. Where, then, is to be found the germ of autobiographical writing? Egyptian literature contains records of the individual; even as early as the Sixth Dynasty are those of Una and Abeba. A papyrus of the Twelfth Dynasty contains a partially autobiographic, romantic narrative by a soldier named Suneha, and similar statements with the names of Ameni and

Kuhmhetp. And in the Eighteenth Dynasty, besides the general Aahmes, more definite types of such records are credited to Thothmes III and to the great Rameses II.

It is rare when a literary movement of significance starts from the throne; for Nature loves to mock the grandeur of kings by seeing to it that enduring and influential waves shall start from the people. But here, in the subjective tendency, we have a distinct development of self-assertion; and for literary manifestations of the instinct of self-assertion, the people, in the early civilizations, were ill-placed. So it is that in the inscriptions of bygone rulers and conquerors the "I" first stands definitely forth.

"I became king; I enslaved such a people; my wisdom and beneficence accomplished this and that." The evolution of this inscription explains itself. On the clay cylinders of Nebuchadnezzar, found by Sir Henry Rawlinson at Birs-Nimrud, are recorded sentences of simple self-glorification, as follows: —

"Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, the rightful ruler, the expression of the righteous heart of Marduk, the exalted high priest, the beloved of Nebo, the wise prince — am I."

Compare this opening, and the bald phrases of description which follow it, with the opening paragraphs of the *Monumentum Ancyranum* translated by Mommsen. The deeds of Augustus, recited in the first

person, are given a manner of detail and weight not at all unlike the historical memoirs of De Thou. Before this, Cæsar's *Commentaries* show us the inscription placed by a wise man upon a more enduring medium than stone; and we are told of certain similar documents left by consuls, such as the lost commentaries of Sulla (under whose influence Cæsar must have written), which show the change in operation. The inscription has become a document. The stonecutter's transcription from the hand of some flattering high priest has gone back to the chief person concerned. The king, the consul, or the emperor has felt the wish to justify himself, to take himself with seriousness; he no longer permits some priest or secretary to put words into his mouth, he writes them himself. Rameses is satisfied if his statue bear the royal insignia, though it be hard to tell from that of his father, Seti; but this does not content Cæsar or Augustus. The ruler no longer desires to be conventionalized, but to be individual. Thus the idea of leaving individual records is pleasing to the sovereign. The example of Cæsar and Augustus is followed by most of their successors; and we find Tiberius, Claudius, Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian, Severus, and Aurelian leaving similar commentaries of a wholly historical nature.

All this is purely objective,— the evolution of the historical and political record. From the vainglorious inscription on tile or monolith, it has moved down for two

thousand years, till it reaches the Roman Empire in the expanded form of commentary. Up to Augustus the evolutionary process had been slow, and only directly influenced, it would seem, by an increased facility in methods of writing. In Hebrew literature the personal memoir, more or less authentic, filled the place of the novel; and Renan points to the books of Nehemiah and Esdras as bearing somewhat the same relation. The primitive book of Tobias had the form of *souvenirs de famille*. But the movement was neither definite nor serious. It did not affect the attitude of Josephus, whose memoir partakes of the Roman form. The words of Josephus boldly accent the objective note in the reason he states for writing his own life:—

"This is an account of the actions of my life. And let others judge of my character by them as they please."

Nothing could be more typical than this of the prevailing tone in the historical record or commentary. The attitude of Nebuchadnezzar is still, in essentials, the attitude of Josephus: "These are my deeds; judge by them." But now appears an entirely new conception, a conception altering the whole subject, and developing so rapidly that scarcely three hundred years after Josephus we may place beside his pages the first pages of Augustin's *Confessions:*—

"This is the fruit of my confessions, not of what I was but of what I am, that I may confess this not before

Thee only, but in the ears also of the believing souls of men. . . . To such, therefore, whom Thou commandest me to serve, will I declare not what I was, but what I now am, and what I still am. But neither do I judge myself. Thus then I would be heard."

When analyzing our mental development, psychologists have divided it into two broad stages: the objective stage of childhood preceding the subjective stage of maturity. We are fond of recurring to this idea; and it is generally assumed that what is true of the individual development will hold good for the development of the race. Nevertheless, when examined closely, these sentences of Augustin's will be found to sound a new note, a music which has not before struck on "the ears also of the believing souls of men."

Here, surely, is *not* a slow development from youth to manhood; but rather the sudden introduction of a novel and violent influence. From the date of the Birs-Nimrud inscription to that of the *Monumentum Ancyranum* is a space of something over two thousand years: while from the typical reason of Josephus to the equally typical reason of Augustin is a little less than three hundred years. Surely, no simple process of mental development can account for so great a difference in attitude in a time so comparatively short. Josephus did not write the last historical memoir; yet Augustin did write the first complex, subjective auto-

biography. What influence, at this point, upon man's inner life has caused the change?

Although it has been little studied, the theory of the subjective influence of Christianity on literature is not a new one. Writers like Gibbon, Boissier, Dill and others, touch on it with reserve, more inclined to accept the broad principles which psychology has laid down for them than to attempt a modification on so scanty an amount of data. Matthew Arnold becomes extremely suggestive when he analyzes the ethical effects of Jesus' teaching: —

"To find his own soul, his true and permanent self, becomes set up, in man's view, as his chief concern." And, again, —

"Instead of attending so much to your outward acts, attend, he [Jesus] said, first of all to your inward thoughts and to the state of your heart and feelings."

These sentences cast so clear a light upon the compared reasons of Josephus and Augustin as to render any further comment superfluous. No doubt the knowledge that a man's actions do not always spring from his "true and permanent self" helped the reaction. No doubt when the soldier-historian wrote, "Let others judge of my character by my deeds as they please," he knew that others could not know the whole self of Flavius Josephus, not, as Augustin was to phrase it, "what I now am, and what I still am." But the literary conven-

tions of his day forced Josephus to be content; and hence the defiant, "Judge me as you please!" He was attending to his outward acts, not to his inward thoughts and the state of his heart and feelings.

The idea of the value of introspection once started in the world of thought, developed rapidly into a standard. Monastic life tended to increase its force. In Thomas à Kempis, whose expression reflects the ideals of mediæval piety, it is clearly stated that "a humble knowledge of thyself is a surer way to God than a deep search after learning."

"It is better for a man to live privately and to have a regard to himself, than to neglect his soul though he should work wonders in the world."

When a new influence acting upon thought turns it into new channels, much may be involuntarily swept along in the flood. When an intellectual change is in the air, even those wholly outside its direct influence may yet submit to its effects. The most violent antagonist to the modern scientific doctrines, yet finds his whole life and methods of thought insensibly altered by them. And thus, when once the subjective idea had become prevalent, it was not only the devout Christian who experienced its power. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus are his personal record, just as the *Monumentum Ancyranum* was that of Augustus. But the change is already at work; the difference is something beyond the mere difference between an essen-

tial ruler and an essential philosopher. When Marcus Aurelius starts by paying tribute to his teachers, describing his faults, his virtues, his most private acts, he stands under the new order. His work is not complete, not systematic self-study, it is fragmentary, detached, and not clear as to the autobiographical intention. But his underlying idea is nearer to Augustin than to Josephus; and although a manual of stoic philosophy and written by an enemy of Christianity, it comes so near Christ's doctrine in its subjectivity as to be the favorite reading of Christians. It marks the moment of change in the whole trend of the personal record.

We noted that Josephus did not write the last historical memoir, and that we find from now onward the two forms of personal record about equally in use. In *Italy and Her Invaders,* Mr. Hodgkin shows that the chronicle and commentary had become the fashion in later Roman literature. The celebrated passage in the *Agricola* of Tacitus is worthy of quotation to show the attitude toward them: "In former times, as there was a greater propensity and freer scope for the performance of actions worthy of remembrance, so every person of distinguished abilities was induced by the consciousness of doing right alone, without regard to favor or interest, to record examples of worth. And many considered it rather as a proof of the confidence of virtue, than of arrogance, to become their own biographers. Of this Rutilius and Scaurus are instances,

who yet neither underwent reproach nor suspicion of want of fidelity on this account."

Here the enthusiasm of the historian, eager for material, is seen; nor was such material denied him, for besides Rutilius Rufus the Consul, and Emilius Scaurus, whose three books of his own life are addressed to L. Fufidius, we hear also that Quintus Lutatius Catulus addressed his autobiography to A. Furius, the poet, and read the names of Valerius Messala Corvinus, and of Commodion, author of a *Carmen apologetica*. These documents appear to be largely mere courtier's imitations of throne records. Later, and under the direct influence of Augustin, came the *Prefatio* of Prudentius, and that other curious autobiographical poem by Paulinus of Pella, the grandson of the poet Ausonius.

The *Eucharisticos de Vita Sua* was written at eighty-three; it omits politics, events, wars, etc., and confines itself to describing Paulinus's mental and religious condition. He recalls his education; how he began Plato and Homer at five years of age; his parents' care to protect his innocence, and his matter-of-course amours with the slaves of the house. Paulinus tells of ill-health, and the out-of-door regimen which cured it. He does not leave unmentioned minor characteristics such as his extravagance; and he calls himself "sectator deliciarum." In brief, the *Eucharisticos* is a methodical piece of self-study, showing the effect of Augustin, and an advance in fullness and method upon the scattered

notes of Marcus Aurelius. As evidence it serves at least to confirm our conclusion that the impulse to serious introspection, to self-study, made its appearance in the world of thought between 100 and 400 A.D., during the period when the Christian faith was taking a firm hold upon society.

# CHAPTER IV

## SINCERITY

Our reason for making this brief historical survey may not have been apparent to the reader. It is necessary, since by this gradual route we approach the great problem of the trustworthiness of the personal record. This is a question with which nine people out of ten will greet such an attempt as the present study, and most of them will be ready with an answer before a page has been read. What warrant have we, they will ask, of the sincerity of this testimony?

Before we can meet this question on a field where we have many and stout antagonists, we must have gained some notion from what the autobiographical impulse sprang, and what influences caused it to become subjective. If it seems impossible to make a complete induction from the evidence at our disposal, there are at least a few suggestive points which are shown by the history of the tendency toward subjectivity. If Christianity is not wholly responsible for the subjective trend of literature and thought; if it is not that, indeed, which we mean when we say such a thing is *modern*, we have at least determined its partial responsibility. We have noted the appearance of this subjective trend coincident with the time in which Christian ideas were

at work upon men's thought. It is not, therefore, too much to insist at the outset on the seriousness of the self-study. And when an examination is made of the early cases and their influence, the very existence of that influence has point for us. One man writes of himself because another writes; personal impressions are repeated in a practically unbroken chain. Few, if any, important autobiographies have been lost, and this is, in itself, an illuminative circumstance. With the exception of Sulla's *Commentaries*, whose effect upon Cæsar was noted by his contemporaries, the capital autobiography has survived, and preserved its fresh effect on later minds, more than any other type of literary work. To what vital quality do we owe this tenacious survival? We reply: sincerity.

This brings us at once face to face with the task for which our little historical axe has cleared the ground. How can we best estimate the sincerity of the subjective record? It is doubted upon every hand. With the *littérateur* this doubt has become axiomatic. Mr. Andrew Lang speaks with contempt of "anecdotes which people tell about their own subjective experiences." George Eliot, in *Theophrastus Such*, says: "In all autobiography there is, nay, ought to be, an incompleteness which may have an effect of falsity. We are each of us bound to reticence by the piety we owe to those who have been nearest to us . . . and, most of all, by that reverence for the higher efforts of our

common nature, which commands us to bury its lowest faculties, its invincible remnants of the brute, its most agonizing struggle with temptation, in unbroken silence." This view not only expresses a doubt of sincerity but appears to give insincerity an ethical value, as if the record both could not and should not be veracious and complete. Mr. Augustine Birrell has the same cautious attitude, when he says that, "'Rousseau's Confessions' ought never to have been written; but written they were, and read they always will be."

To some minds, the fact that a book will always be read constitutes a proof of its value, but Mr. Birrell's opinion of the *Confessions* is a very common one. A great autobiographer is perpetually shrouded in a veil of comment and contradiction, and followed by a crowd of acquaintances, correspondents, and distant relatives, clamoring to give him the lie. Rousseau is a notable case in point. It has taken one hundred years to discover that the pink-and-silver ribbon he stole from a fellow-servant was not a diamond nor a silver dish, but just a ribbon of pink-and-silver. Pages have been written about the error he made in the date of his christening, which error has been made to serve as a text to show his general unreliability. Any chance witness of genius in some one of its passing moods is sure to take such mood for a permanent characteristic, and triumphantly to point out that it is not shown in the autobiography. "Not to be relied on": the book is waved

aside; "A man's estimate of himself, you know," and so on.

To the serious student of the personal record it would seem that there lay an injustice in the point of view. What, on the whole, do we require from the autobiographer as an excuse for his existence? That he should tell us the detailed facts which others might as easily give, or that he should flash on the canvas some aspect of the human figure which he alone knows? Accuracy as to dates is needful in writing anybody's life, but more needful still is a vital picture of the creature as he lived. Contemplating human nature in an introspective mood, one must be prepared to find in self-study a certain looseness as to exterior matters. The eye cannot look both in and out at the same time. Many important autobiographers avoid even the pretext of attention to date and event. Augustin is by no means clear as to the passage of time, but the value of his self-revelation is not thereby lessened. The corrective of supplementary study is readily applied to amend the autobiographer in his — one might almost say essential — errors of memory, to balance and counteract his emphasis on certain stages of his intellectual and emotional progress. These mistakes become unimportant in proportion as the main work is important. The object of the autobiographer must be to concentrate on that which he alone knows — the real man. As Professor James says, he aims to discover primarily states of con-

sciousness. If Jean Jacques Rousseau in the *Confessions* be the Jean Jacques as he lived, what matter the date of his christening?

Whether the aim of the self-student, moved by the autobiographical intention, is to present such a figure, and how far his aim is realized—this is our theme. It is surely worth while to consider; our friends' sincerity is of deep importance to us. Comparisons of personality and method, examination of motives and their fulfillment, cannot fail to be instructive. They will help to show us whether, in the main, one can rely on the autobiographer. For, if the autobiographical intention springs from deep-seated psychological conditions, then an avowed reason for writing possesses a value it has not had before, as showing the seriousness and the motive power of such an intention.

It was seen a few pages back how suggestive was the comparison of Cardan's reason for writing with Cellini's, and that of Augustin with Josephus's. A table placed in the Appendix will show at a glance certain similar comparisons on a broad scale, using as a basis about 265 capital autobiographies.[1]

Out of the 265 cases, 38 write without any given reason at all; 52 write frankly for amusement, to recall the past, or to record some extraordinary event; 64 write in the interest of self-study and of science; 42 as religious testimonials; 26 for the use of children or de-

[1] See Appendix A, "Reasons for Writing."

scendants; 15 at the request of friends; 12 because no one else is likely to do it; 11 from apologetic motives; 1 "to emblazon the power of opium "(De Quincey); 1 from pride of birth; 1 for self-abasement; 1 for money; 1 to study his own case of insanity; and 1 to polish his Latin.

It becomes at once apparent that the serious and laudable motives for writing are in the ascendant. Of the 52 whose reason is purely objective, a subdivision has been made, showing that a certain proportion fulfill in their task the main requirements of scientific self-study.

The request of friends, which, at first sight, one would have supposed to have actuated by far the larger number, is the given reason of only 15. Such weighty motives as sciences, religion, or the benefits to descendants, move 126 on this list. Yet Lombroso[1] speaks of the "rare instances" when vanity permits men of genius to yield spontaneous revelations of themselves!

Among those writing frankly in the interests of truth, we find such persons as Alfieri, Gibbon, Cardan, Egerton Brydges, Mill, Goethe, Rousseau, George Sand, Descartes, Erasmus, and Herbert Spencer. The simplicity of Charles Darwin includes him among those who write for pastime, together with La Grande Mademoiselle, Sir Kenelm Digby, Madame Roland, etc. Seriously affectionate persons such as Marmontel, Franklin, and

[1] "Man of Genius," Part VI.

Agrippa d'Aubigné write to aid or warn their children. The diverse religious views of Newman, Augustin, and George Fox, Annie Besant, Tolstoi, and Teresa, have inspired personal testimony. Extremes of fortune are told by Colley Cibber, Trench, Latude, Hans Andersen: apologies for ill behavior by such as Ireland and Psalmanazar. Oddly enough, there is but one person of all this noble company who writes avowedly for money. It is John Galt, the novelist, and he adds that "it is not a very gentlemanly occupation." This attitude is but a part of his whole contempt of literary pursuits, which he quite openly despised, always hoping that he might do something more useful than "stringing blethers into rhyme, or writing clishmaclavers in a closet." There is nothing more irritating to the reader than the success of this person, who left business, he tells us, "sullenly" to devote himself to "the fancy-work of letters." One even feels unsympathetic when reading that Galt's later years were clouded by an obscure nervous disease.

If sincerity seems to have been promised by the large number of autobiographies seriously conceived and executed in the interest of self-study and scientific truth, it may be well to note how deep an impression the need for candor has made upon the mind of the writer. His style here, his tone and accent, the weight of the initial motive, are all of value, and, perchance, may serve to do away with such an airy scorn as Mr. Lang's.

"Truth, naked, unblushing truth," said Gibbon, "the

first virtue of serious history, must be the sole recommendation of this personal narrative."

"To speak, and therefore even more to write of oneself springs doubtless from self-love," declares Alfieri, "and the scope of a work like this is the study of mankind. Of what man can he better or more wisely speak than himself — what other has he studied so well?"

"Private History," in the estimate of Sir Egerton Brydges, "enables us to ascertain our author's sincerity; and that is essential to the authority of his opinions. I labor, therefore, to estimate with rigid and stern enquiry what faculties of the mind ought most to prevail."

The lively Bussy-Rabutin furnishes us with a reason for entire sincerity which is that of a man of the world: "Je ne serai ni assez vain ni assez ridicule pour me louer sans raison; mais aussi n'aurai-je pas une assez sotte honte pour ne pas dire de moi des choses avantageuses quand ce seront des vérités," he writes; and this statement is doubly interesting when we find how very few "choses avantageuses" to himself he finds to tell!

Charles Darwin, who writes because "I have thought the attempt might amuse me or might possibly interest my children," goes on to say: "I have attempted to write the following account of myself as if I were a dead man in another world looking back at my own life."

Even Gozzi, who took memoir writing so lightly that he names his book "Memorie inutili della vita di C.

Gozzi, pubblicate per umiltà," yet speaks of "the detailed portrait I intend to execute of myself."

Haydon, the painter, has left us one of the most suggestive autobiographies that was ever placed side by side with the journals which furnished its material. It is one to which we shall have much occasion to refer, and here it were well to cite one sentence, in its original typographical form: ". . . A biography derives its sole interest and ability from its *Exact Truth.*"

The reason which Mademoiselle d'Orléans gives for her faithful and valuable record, is the frank ennui that she felt when banished from court life. "It is hard to conceive," she maintains, "with what things the mind of a person accustomed to court can occupy itself when reduced to living in the country! . . . But I shall bring to these pages all I can remember from my childhood to this hour, as exactly as is possible to me." And she keeps her word.

Compare Mademoiselle with another French woman, one who understood the power and the limitations of the autobiography as perhaps none other.

"Pour certains esprits," says George Sand, "se connaître est une étude fastidieuse et toujours incomplète." And the *Histoire de ma Vie* she declared to be "une étude sincère de ma propre nature, et un examen attentif de ma propre existence."

These examples have been gathered at random, and enough have been shown to serve our purpose. One

might go on and cite as many more if space permitted. The above will show, at least, that the psychologist and scientist who takes the memoir seriously is more reasonable than the *littérateur* who derides its truth. Surely, if a purpose and an ideal of sincerity have been found in autobiographers so unlike in temperament, gifts, and character as these, one may infer that they form a part of the autobiographical intention, when that is strong and definite.

But here we are interrupted by our cynical *littérateur*. "Ah," he cries, "what avails protest? The assertion that one means to tell the truth is nothing!"

"According to your own lights, *cher monsieur*," we may fitly reply, "lights cast from scattered and often trivial reading, you have cause to think so. Single cases of protest would have little significance and less value. The assertion from John Stuart Mill, let us say, that he intends to be truthful, would simply increase your own feeling of self-distrust. Would *you* tell how you cheated at school and won the prize? Or that in your heart of hearts you hourly desire the death of the stupid elder brother who stands in your way of the dukedom? Certainly not; you would die first! Ergo neither would John Stuart Mill . . . But, then, *cher monsieur*, you have not the autobiographical intention. You are not, be it said with all due respect, an important person. You are neither Alfieri, Charles Darwin, Cardan, nor Rousseau. The imperious lash of Truth upon

the neck of the great, that fretful urging to candor, is one of the many differences between them and ourselves. And when we observe it acting as an influence, not upon one able person, but (to take only one group) upon 61 able persons, we may believe that it forms a component part of some quality to which, as the mediocre, we are forced regretfully to renounce all claim, but which we must, nevertheless, recognize in action, and respect in result."

It is time we dropped our glib generalizations, and acknowledged the different standards of greater men. A superior sincerity, a more penetrative candor, — these are tokens of their greatness and a reason for their survival. Yet the reader must not jump to the conclusion that we do not differentiate between accuracy in detail and accuracy in portraiture. It is not for a single instant asserted that Rousseau gave the correct date of his christening; that George Sand felt for Frédéric Chopin only "une passion maternelle très vive, très vraie," as the *Histoire de ma Vie* asserts; that Guibert de Nogent's mother struggled all night with a demon who upset the furniture; or that Jerome Cardan learned Greek in a dream. But it is claimed, and it would seem capable of proof, that the personalities of those autobiographers whose work is inspired by a serious intention, and executed by an able hand, are, in their main aspects, truthfully portrayed. Further, that they are more truthful, more complete, than the

same figures drawn by an outside pencil. And this is logical. What makes Boswell so great a biographer, but the ability to let his hero reveal himself at every turn, in every event and mood?

Before leaving this aspect of the subject it were well to see whether biography, as a whole, supports or contradicts the autobiographer. To name a life of every one of our chief cases is, of course, out of the question; we must restrict ourselves to the more salient figures. Let us only ask the *cher monsieur*, so sceptical of the whole business, to name a life of Rousseau, in which the personality differs *as a personality* from that drawn in the *Confessions*. The standard lives of Alfieri, Goldoni, Mill, Mademoiselle d'Orléans — great autobiographers all — rely completely and naïvely upon them for all intimate aspects of the subject. Watson's life of George Fox avowedly draws its matter from the Journal. Morrison's life of Edward Gibbon does the same. The figure of Benvenuto Cellini stands out unchallenged, in all its vigor and color, through the centuries. Jerome Cardan's bitterest enemies refer to the *De Vita Propria Liber*, as an exact picture of his extraordinary personality. Even in the case of George Sand's *Histoire de ma Vie* — a book wherein we know there has been a hiatus, and in which the central figure, though perfect in parts, is undeniably mutilated — there has recently been conclusive testimony. In the preface to her life by Wladimir

Karénine, and that to the volume entitled *George Sand et sa Fille*, by Samuel Rocheblave, we find the authors declaring that by the most minute researches they have been unable to alter the personal impression of the *Histoire* in a single material particular. Similarly, in a well-balanced English biography of George Sand, the author speaks of "the profound truth of the spirit of the narrative," and acknowledges it as "the important source" of all accounts of her early life.

What the student and biographer has done, you and I may do without distrust. It seems undeniable that the majority of capital autobiographies have been written in the interest of truth, and are the outcome of serious intention, the result of a deep-seated psychological impulse, which, as a whole, makes for the truth. The figures which are drawn under these conditions, therefore, we believe to be, in the main, the figures of the persons as they lived.

# CHAPTER V

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY, THE DIARY, AND THE LETTER

It is George Sand who stands beside the reader to remind him that " l'étude du cœur humain est de telle nature que plus on s'y absorbe moins on y voit clair." Self-distrust, appreciation of the danger and deceits of self-contemplation, has inspired certain generalizations which pass about easily from lip to lip, until mere repetition seems about to make truths of them. It is in the letter and the diary, rather than in the deliberate autobiography, that we are told to look for the valuable self-revelation. Everybody has heard the phrases into which this idea has been cast: " Not written for the public eye, but in the privacy of the closet. — In his letters a man lets himself go."

It seems almost inconsiderate to deprive conversation of its conveniences by introducing the element of thought. The stupid and the banal are cut off from their part in it when the question is asked: " Is this true? " But one has entered here a field where the dull and the trite have rioted for years without contradiction. This is a pet topic, a stronghold of the inept. Should anyone doubt this, let him make a remark about the use of self-study in any mixed assemblage, not too young.

He is sure to hear the phrases just quoted, to catch the name of Rousseau,—fondly believed to be the parent of this iniquity,—and to note much head-wagging over the deceitfulness of the human heart. It were perhaps cruel to remind these respectable persons that their own self-analysis might have a less value and sincerity than that of Augustin, or Herbert Spencer; or that the desire to see oneself clearly is part of an intellectual initiative from which they are free. The factor which gives value to personal evidence is the relative importance of the subject; and it is the sense of his own inadequacy which causes *l'homme sensuel moyen* to cry out so loudly against the whole business.

*L'homme sensuel moyen*, having no reason to suppose that posterity has any concern with him, can imagine himself jotting his introspections upon a diary in a corner of the billiard-room, over a glass of brandy-and-soda, when the idea of self-study in writing his life would seem factitious. Does this same attitude prevail with those individuals whose gifts make the judgment of posterity inevitable? We are here to decide. The case of the conscious *vs.* the unconscious self-revelation, must be heard and dismissed before we can reach the further point toward which we aim.

The partisans of the diary and the letter claim that their very ephemeral character causes them to be the more trustworthy media of the writer's individuality. Yet examination in sequence of a series of important

journals does not, by any means, corroborate this view. Had Saint-Simon published only those journals which he later revised and bound into a coherent narrative, how much of his personality might not have been lost! Such diaries as Evelyn's or Greville's aim chiefly at presenting the daily historical and political events of their time. Neither contains self-revelation of any real importance. As for the inestimable Pepys, whom a grateful reader would not undervalue, his glance goes not beyond the day. The man is shown to us in pieces, fragments thrown into the occurrences which he describes; his eye is on the event; and, although we delight in the picture, we know that much has been lost. That first volume of Fanny Burney's Journal conveys most of its total effect, and is weighted with a distinct autobiographical intention, which is not, however, sustained. And in proportion as this idea was abandoned, and the mere daily jottings kept, the work loses in vigor and in vividness. The constructive touch is needed here, as in other literary work, to carry conviction. Scott's Journal contains the noble record of his adversity, but it was taken up too late in life to serve us as a satisfactory picture of his character, had we not been fortunately able to supplement it by the fragment of Autobiography with which Lockhart begins the Life. It is to this, not to the Journal, we owe our knowledge of the fundamentals of Scott's character. In Moore's Journal we are perpetually troubled by a sense of the trifling details and happenings which come

in a cloud between us and the figure of the kindly, little man, and which, in a deliberate narrative, would have been put aside as unimportant. In his unfinished memoirs they are so put aside. This has brought us to the first point, that the main difference between diary and autobiography lies in an increased sense of proportion in the latter, whose first object is to clear away everything which may come between you and the subject. Also it is interesting that Moore's editor, Lord Russell, should remark on the fact that Moore's ideal of himself as a literary figure caused his journal to be filled with London visits and suppers with celebrities, so that one might suppose his time far more occupied with them than was really the case. The well-balanced account of his childhood and youth in the Memoir falls into no such error, since the desire here is of self-study, not merely to recall an amusing story, or to record a gay evening, or to see in one's diary the names of persons prominent in literature.

When we examine correspondence, we find no cause to change this impression; it is, indeed, the usual attitude of the more scrupulous commentator. Readers of the great letter-writers, of Voltaire and Goethe, of Petrarch and Cicero, of Madame de Sevigné and Madame du Deffand, do not need to be reminded of the warnings they have received from the editors of these collections not to allow themselves to be hurried away too quickly by their sympathy with the writer. Words are an effer-

vescence of mood thrown hastily upon paper, often the result of a desire to experiment with oneself, to create a non-existent feeling, to rouse a dormant emotion, or to prick some mere vexation into active anger. Here is matter for exaggeration and with no corrective. For in the page of the diary or the letter a man may indulge himself — he may, in the ordinary phrase, "let himself go." And if the reader is tempted to think that the truth is more apt to come to the surface when a man "lets himself go," we can only beg him to apply the same standard to himself in a similiar case. The predominance of mood, the lack of self-restraint, which means the "letting oneself go," form, in themselves, a onesidedness, which is a kind of insincerity. Lavater's Journal, which he called *The Secret History of a Self-observer*, is a notable example of such disproportion. His perpetual self-questioning provoked no truthful replies in his soul. And when his servant-maid is sullen on being summoned, and his comment is, "Her answer did not provoke me, and it made me quite proud I was not angry," the reader is convinced neither that the introspection is true, nor valuable, nor even that Lavater was not provoked, nor proud that he was not.

But when the letter-writer or journalist sits to explain himself to the audience of posterity, or to plead his cause before the jury of the coming generations, has he not a powerful incentive to ask: "Is this true? Was this vexation of mind wholly real — was the true

inwardness of my wounded feeling made plain to me when I wrote under its sting?"

In other words, is not the autobiographical intention a weighty corrective to bring hasty moods into measure?

This whole question of imagination in the letter-writer and its exaggeration of the fleeting mood is discussed with fullness and finish by M. Gaston Boissier, in his fascinating volume on *Cicero and his Friends.*[1] It is impossible to express better than he does how these fugitive thoughts are "only flashes . . . fixed and accentuated by writing, they acquire a clearness, a relief and importance which they had not in reality." If this be true of all written self-revelation, then, surely the existence of a powerful motive to act as corrective comes to have a deeper significance.

However, the examination of single examples of diarist and letter-writer cannot be conclusive. The best method of estimating comparative sincerity is surely to take cases like Scott or Moore in which exist both the autobiography and the journal from which its material was drawn, so that we may contrast our impressions. These are not so rare as one would think.

No one can forget the quarrel between Rousseau and Madame d'Épinay, nor could anything be more suggestive as an illustration of this point than a comparison of the *Confessions*, the *Mémoires de Madame d'Épinay*, and their letters on the subject. The entire corre-

[1] "Cicéron et ses Amis," Introduction.

spondence has been preserved, and letters passed between the two insulted dignities with the fullness and frequency to which annoyance spurs the literary habit. In these letters we find Jean Jacques breathing outraged sensibility and insulted affection. To hear him, one would believe the difference arose from the righteous wrath of a finally-roused patience, and had its root in complicated spiritual misunderstandings, such as cloud the pages of Mr. Henry James. With *both* the correspondents, those large words, sensitiveness, friendship, loyalty, obligation, appear in every other sentence. Hear the *châtelaine de l'Ermitage* in her own defense, prefacing that her *Mémoires*, written under the form of fiction, have no serious intention, but are a mere stage-setting for her idea of her own romantic situation. She suggests, however, in her comments on the letters, the fact that Rousseau's lack of business sense made any satisfactory arrangement between them impossible; and her attitude is that of a patroness whose good humor has been taken for granted once too often. There is not a hint of sentiment.

Knowing Jean Jacques, we expect the *Confessions* to give fully his own side of the quarrel. Surely, he will not abate the majestic attitude! On the contrary, we find him describing the difference exactly as it was; the contest of two greedy vanities, having its origin in a dispute as to which should pay the gardener's wages. Is it necessary to say that the gardener, *in se*, is

practically suppressed in the letters? He has become symbolized, he is servitude, he is obligation. By the pen of Madame, whose intention is not serious, the vague, general reference to a financial origin of their difference is yet made, notwithstanding that it detracts from her romantic position. And in the *Confessions*, result of a powerful autobiographical intention, powerfully executed, the whole truth is written out, no matter what light it casts upon the large terms in the letters. To those of us who know Jean Jacques, which aspect of the quarrel is the more convincing?

One example more: in the Tom Taylor edition, the autobiography of Benjamin Robert Haydon is bound up with the journals which were its source. Now, with Haydon mood is everything; his intensity of thought and expression wraps him in it, and his lack of measure is an inherent quality. He is also a man with a grievance; he lived in terrible financial straits; he ended in delusions of persecution, in madness, in suicide. His is a case which will either make or break us, for he has little self-control; he turns with a fierce, stern pleading, and begs us to see and to understand. He has no superficial cleverness, he will stand or fall alone. During a crisis in his affairs and while he is finishing a cartoon, Haydon speaks, in the *Autobiography*, of his "gasping anxiety" at this time, and writes: "My mind wanted the discipline of early training." As the work grows, Haydon gives us the prayer of his soul: "Never

have I had such irresistible and perpetual urgings of future greatness; while I was painting, writing or thinking, beaming flashes of energy followed and impressed me. O God, grant they may be the fiery anticipations of a great soul born to realize them!"

This is painfully intense, in truth, yet compare it with the Journal of the same period: —

"How delightfully time flies when one paints," he jots on one page. The succeeding entry is: "Painted in delicious and exquisite misery." Then: "Thank God with all my soul the very name of high art — the very thought of a picture — gives my children a hideous and disgusting taste in the mouth."

And, the next day: "Huzza! huzza! huzza! my cartoon is up!"

If self-control counts as an element in a writer's sincerity, if there is any value in the study of our past moods and feelings, it is not lightly indicated in this comparison. The horrible alternations of poor Haydon's mood, intensified and exaggerated by the self-indulgence of his diary, are brought into some degree of measure and understanding when he comes to put them before the public eye. The mere fact of an audience causes him to examine them more nearly, to remember and bring forward that lack of discipline from early training which accounts for the lack of balance. The desire of candor and of completeness has laid hold of him. So we have found the autobiographer reveal-

ing weaknesses and errors which he has sedulously concealed in his intercourse with friends, in his diary or letters, and which need never have been known at all but for the prick of this influence. Sometimes these are frank sins; sometimes merely such ungraciousnesses as do a man no credit for avowing. Why was Gibbon at such pains to tell us, on the occasion of his father's death: "The tears of a son are seldom lasting. Few, perhaps, are the children who after the expiration of many months would sincerely rejoice in the restoration of their parents," except that he believed it to be the truth?

In her autobiography, Catherine II of Russia plainly states that the father of her son and heir, Peter, was Soltykov, a fact about which there was much discussion and which was of great political importance. Yet she commits it to paper, although it was the very last thing one could imagine her admitting. The Cardinal de Retz says: "Je pris, après six jours de reflexion, le parti de faire le mal par dessein . . . ce qui est sans comparaison le plus criminel devant Dieu, mais sans doute le plus sage devant le monde."

The mention by Benjamin Franklin of certain offences which he calls *errata*, is not only perfectly gratuitous, but distinctly calculated to lower that public esteem for which he had striven. Acts like Cellini's stab of a comrade in the back, the gambling transactions of Cardan, and minor meannesses of Rous-

seau, would never have risen to the surface at all had their authors chosen to keep silence. No diary preserved them, one may be sure. Nor does a morbid strain, the lack of sense of humor, account for their appearance. One could hardly call Franklin, Cellini, or Catherine II morbid; and if Gibbon lacked humor, it chances to be definitely present in Cellini, Cardan, and de Retz.

No; the endeavor to stand for what we are, springs from a deeper motive, a more serious psychological condition, than the *littérateur* is willing to allow. Robert Louis Stevenson, for instance, writing on Pepys, comments on his subject's candor with amazement. He cannot understand why Pepys recorded actions avowedly best left unrecorded, and he speaks of him as an isolated phenomenon. This is only another case to prove how much the critic has need of the psychologist. He would, otherwise, fail to note an influence present as a motive-power in natures ethically deficient, such as Cellini, de Retz, or Psalmanazar, the impostor. It acts as corrective to the religious fanatic who wishes to show you a miserable sinner transformed into a saint, yet who feels obliged to tell you, like George Fox, that even before his conversion people loved him for his "innocency and honesty." Trembling, as she believes, upon the brink of hell-fire, Teresa gives us the brilliant portrait of her girlish self, whom everyone always saw with pleasure,—"on m'a toujours vu avec plaisir."

It is this which, in the deliciously naïve memoirs of Mary Robinson (Perdita, the actress), causes her to break off short at the moment of her capitulation to George IV, although she has gone along swimmingly up to that point. One reads her inability to lie about it, and her failure to find an excuse for it, in every broken line.

The case of Perdita, just cited, brings us to the obscure and difficult group of the partially sincere cases. Up to this moment, we have dealt with those master examples over whom the autobiographical intention has had a full sway, and whom it has influenced to a full sincerity. But there are, of course, many self-students in whom this influence is defective, weakened, or counteracted, and it were not amiss to glance at some of the chief causes which stand in the way of its normal operation. There are intellectual causes and emotional causes working against the autobiographical intention. Of the intellectual, the chief is the objective cast of mind. This causes the writer to be particular about acts, dates, events, and other persons, while he himself remains mistaken and obscure. He may thus write a useful work for history, which has no value for us here, although it must not be supposed that this is necessarily the case. Saint-Simon would seem to contradict us; what he writes of himself is true. But who can assert that Guizot's memoirs, or Lord Brougham's, have aided us to understand their character?

The chief cause for partial or defective sincerity, leading to a lower value in the finished work, is the sentimental point of view. It is most strikingly present in the German examples, among whom it would be fair to include Hans Andersen and Holberg. Sentiment, the sentimental attitude toward what concerns oneself, hangs like a hazy cloud over the narrative, obscuring facts, distorting experience. This disfigurement injures the psychological value of Jean Paul Richter, of Lavater's Journal, of Kotzebue, of Karoline Bauer, and of Georg Ebers, even of the infinitely greater case of Goethe. The *Wahrheit und Dichtung* is the weakest autobiography the world has ever had from so strong a hand. Enthusiasts over it are almost invariably to be found among those persons who think a sincere self-revelation pernicious and undesirable. It has not contributed in any material degree to our idea of the writer. Goethe's age at the time it was written, his secure consequence in a world where he saw no need for explanation or justification, and, above everything, his mental habit of confusing sentiment with fact, have all helped to lower its value. Pages there are of such magnificent and penetrating criticism as make us feel the deeper regret that this is so. It is hard to pardon George Sand for telling us that she felt for Frédéric Chopin "une passion maternelle très vive, très vraie"; but what can we reply to Goethe, when he asks us to believe of his early love-affair that "the first propensi-

ties to love in uncorrupted youth take altogether a spiritual direction"? George Sand, as a woman, is in an anomalous position, and if she omits the entire subject of her sex-life, she amply atones by the most minute and thorough study of her intellectual and imaginative development. So clear, orderly, vivid, and full is she on this side, that every worker, and one might almost say every woman, must benefit. Goethe would be forgiven had he been equally full respecting his mental growth. But he only mentions that he dreamed of "the laurel garland to adorn the poet's brow."

Fortunately, that extraordinary figure was so long prominent upon our stage, that we have not had to depend upon the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*. If we had, a shadowy and meditative youth, of low vitality, given to platonic *amourettes*, would have taken the place of that splendid embodiment of young manhood. But Goethe, whose ability for science and love of it was marked, let slip the opportunity to make use of it when he came to writing about himself, and so lost to psychology forever the chance of gaining any classified and thorough information as to the mental processes of that man who has served to show, above any other modern, what man may become.

The results of the sentimental attitude in minor cases of autobiography are more violent, if less important. In Hans Andersen's *Das Märchen meines Lebens*, the actual facts are like morsels of quicksilver in the

hand — one cannot lay hold of them. Kotzebue, who imitates Goethe, laments the death of his wife in terms of frenzy. Ten years later, by date on the manuscript, occurs his terrific agitation at being separated a few months from a wife, who, of course, is number two, but who has not appeared before. In Richter's *Truth from My Own Life*, facts, reflections, feelings, are hopelessly entangled. To take an English book of a similar type, Sir Kenelm Digby, writing definitely with the purpose of clearing his wife's good name, becomes so sentimentally rhapsodical as to their relations before marriage, that we are quite as doubtful as to the Lady Venetia Stanley's reputation as was contemporary society. So fatal is this flaw that the degree of its absence becomes almost a standard of value.

One cannot turn away finally from the partially constructive, partially candid autobiographies without observing those cases of definite failure — not in intention but in execution — from simple lack of writer's gift. Every now and then, one happens on a volume wherein the intention is deep and expressed, and the subject wholly ignorant as to how it must be carried out. In fifty-four pages of introduction, Dr. Caldwell gives the clearest rules for scientific self-study, which he at once proceeds to disregard. Notwithstanding all he has said about motives and springs of action, he gives practically no data, mentions few characteristics, and of childhood notes nothing but his industry. A more modern book

by John Beattie Crozier is entitled *My Inner Life: A Chapter in Personal Evolution.* Here would seem to be the autobiographical intention in its most definite form; yet the work contains little but opinions, and the description of a background. One does not hear if the author is tall or short, healthy or fragile, indolent or energetic, phlegmatic or sensitive. Although appreciating the value of autobiography, the writer is wholly unequipped for the task.

To the sentimentalist and to the plainly inadequate, must be added one more example, though interesting perhaps to the pathologist only. The rogue and the charlatan have been lately examined by Professor Chandler in his *Literature of Roguery*, where their confessions receive due consideration. Oddly enough, there are to be found valuable moments of frank self-revelation in these documents — moments sometimes unknown to the virtuous. These single flashes of truth and sincerity cannot be passed over, for they are frequently significant. The case of George Psalmanazar is a typical illustration. He was an eighteenth century impostor who pretended to have come from Formosa, and to know the language of that island, which, of course, he invented. He numbered among his victims the foremost intellects of the day. His memoirs, reputed to be the result of his religious conversion and repentance, are fulsome and affected, but most striking when we come to his own analysis of the imposture. It sprang,

he says, "from my vanity and senseless affectation of singularity, as that was my predominant passion." The phrase is a text to impress on us that since there is a soul of truth in all error, few personal records can be safely ignored. For Psalmanazar has furnished us here with the *mot d'énigme* to a certain type of clever cheat, in all its different manifestations, from Cagliostro and the Abbé de Choisy to the Sar Peladan and Oscar Wilde.

To sum up, if one can indeed sum up human nature, whence springs this deeply rooted desire to stand for what we are? Since we find it unquestionably present in greater or less measure through this mass of records, may we not therefore urge them the more confidently on the attention of the psychologist? An impulse toward the truth exists, it would seem, in natures conscious of no ethical reason for it. To what is it due? Is it, as Marcus Aurelius believes, "man's reverence for the ruling faculty, the divinity within him"? Or is it an æsthetic impulse based on the artist's desire for perfection? Perchance to Cellini the writer, the figure of himself stood forth to be wrought with the same minute perfection he would accord to a king's chalice or a pope's button. And so nothing is omitted; hidden things are dragged forth, that the work may be complete. Who shall decide what has caused to speak truthfully such various tongues of men? Not we in this place; we can do no more than point out the existence

of this vein of gold running through the dross. Point to it we must before we leave broad generalities and come to persons and to personalities. So we direct attention to the fact, somewhat in the same manner as Lord Brougham prefaced his autobiography with a note to his executors, the capitals of which are his own: "The narrative is to be printed AS I HAVE WRITTEN IT. . . . I alone am answerable. . . . I desire . . . [it] . . . . shall be published as *exclusively* MY OWN."

*Ego sum.* Here it is, the "I am" of humanity: first, and perhaps last, word in the book which has never been completed. If some pages of it have been opened to the reader he should be content. He must not ask us yet for definitely crystallized conclusions. Ours has been merely the long ramble of two intimates over a new country. We have gone out together for the sake of the walk and of the friends whom we should meet by the way.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE THREE GREAT ARCHETYPES

If Rousseau had been right when he declared, "Je forme une entreprise qui n'eut jamais d'exemple," we should have felt no such security regarding the ground we tread as now forms our basis for the general and particular study of sincerity. But the *Confessions* served merely to give a powerful impetus and re-animation to a movement started centuries before the days of Jean Jacques. Three masters have successively contributed to this movement: these were Cæsar, Augustin, and Cardan. Our historical survey leads us directly to these three names as the predominant influences upon all later manifestations of autobiographical writing.

It seems plain to us to-day that Cæsar's *Commentaries* are not autobiographical, yet they have inspired later autobiography to an extent almost incalculable. To what degree they themselves are inspired by those non-extant commentaries of Sulla we cannot estimate. But the influence of Cæsar is traceable and direct. "Ce grand capitaine, qui est César," says Monluc, "m'en monstre le chemin"; and he stands as but one of hundreds to whom the Roman has shown the road. It is hard to find a single objective historical record for

eight hundred years which does not avow that its inspiration came from Cæsar's *Commentaries*. Their conciseness, their balance and directness, major qualities of an historian, appear to have been the model for these later private historians. This recognized fact is aptly expressed in a paragraph quoted by Boswell[1] from the observations of the *Critical Reviewers:* —

"We may reduce the egotists to four classes. In the first we have Julius Cæsar; he relates his own transactions, but he relates them with peculiar grace and dignity, and his narrative is supported by the greatness of his character and achievements. In the second class we have Marcus Antoninus; this writer has given us a series of reflections on his own life; but his sentiments are so noble, his morality so sublime, that his meditations are universally admired. In the third class we have some others of tolerable credit, who have given importance to their own private history by an intermixture of literary anecdotes and the occurrences of their own times — the celebrated Huetius has published an entertaining volume upon this plan. In the fourth class we have the journalists, temporal and spiritual; Elias Ashmole, William Lilly, George Whitefield, Wesley, and a thousand other old women and fanatic writers of memoirs and meditations."

It is interesting here to see that the writer of the paragraph has formed an idea of classifying this spe-

[1] Boswell (Hill), III, p. 195 (on Dr. Rutty).

cies of document, however different this classification would be from our own. The "but" apologizing for Cæsar and Marcus Aurelius is significant of the discredit passed upon the whole matter, which is further shown by the "universal admiration" which he thinks justifies the latter. And lastly we see the more subjective personal documents classed with the old women and fanatics. We feel otherwise toward the "journalists, temporal and spiritual," to-day; but the preëminence of Cæsar, his grace and dignity, his "greatness of character and achievements," make him still the model. He stands at the head, he remains the type.

In his turn, the influence of Augustin is no less marked, no less enduring. Moreover, the vital freshness, the originality of Augustin constitute a force in themselves. To analyze, to study one's self for the glory of God, the humiliation of one's own sin, and the aid of other poor stumbling creatures, —this is Augustin's great thought; so far as we can trace it, it belongs wholly to him. It is gloriously full and perfect; it strikes a note at once intimate and uplifting — that "he who humbleth himself shall be exalted." The vigor, the poignant strength of this conception, helped to restore self-respect to those natures whom the early Christian tenets had depressed and debased until they were both passive and useless. Augustin realized that the doctrine of original sin tended in certain temperaments to eat away like some corrosive acid the very springs of action,

thus killing manhood and strength and leaving only a lax inertia. By turning the eye inward to examine with reverent study the creature that he really was, Augustin thought to freshen and revive the activities of the religious man. He was beyond measure successful. On the sensitive, emotionally religious person the fascination of Augustin's *Confessions* is hypnotic. It may be seen at work in Teresa, in Robert Blair, in Guibert de Nogent, in Bishop Huet of Avranches, and in Jeanne de la Mothe-Guyon. Just as we may trace the influence of Cæsar on the memoir so-called, so has the religious confession been influenced by Augustin.

And from exactly opposite causes. The reticent brevity of the commander is antagonistic to the Bishop of Hippo. His very strength lies in his fullness; it is the same later on with Rousseau. Health and help lie for some natures in complete avowal, in seeing all our torment and trouble, "the invincible remnants of the brute, the agonizing struggle with temptation," through the medium of another's mind and character. We are dragged out of our singularity, we are measured up to greatness; a strong hand holds us. Augustin's vitality is high; and he was not born with any more delicate sense of values, of justice, of proportion, than the rest of us. He is humanly tormented, humanly released. He has the common moral inconsistencies; he classes the sins of stealing and concupiscence along with the Manichæan heresy. Later biographers take him

to task for exaggeration as to his faults. Father Joseph McCabe stigmatizes the ethics of the *Confessions* as "utterly false," because in the light of his conversion Augustin "is sternly bent on magnifying his misdeeds." In our opinion, this biographer seems to forget that Augustin is writing to aid others from the standard of the ideal moralist, and that, from this view-point, stealing and concupiscence were not, after all, such trifling errors. The early life led by Augustin would be condemned by the community to-day; why then is he exaggerating when he condemns it? There are those to whom an utter and fundamental sincerity appears as indecent; their candor must be always clothed. To others, naked sincerity has a nobility and beauty like the naked body. M. Gaston Boissier comments on this quality of the *Confessions*, declaring that he knows no work possessing it to the same degree.[1] "Il a voulu être vrai, et pour l'essentiel il l'a été." Life ran generously through Augustin's veins. He takes first one side of himself, then the other to show us. As a boy he disliked study and preferred to play ball. "So small a boy, so great a sinner! . . . Deceiving with innumerable lies both tutor and masters and parents, from love of play, a desire to see frivolous spectacles, and a stage-struck restlessness."[2] But he allows: "I lived and felt, I learned to take pleasure in truth,

[1] "La Fin du Paganisme," I, pp. 340–342.

[2] "Confessions," I, 18.

I was averse to being deceived; I had a vigorous memory."

It is in these balancing statements that we see self-study, that we note the first great self-student. Able autobiography may contain much self-revelation, which is not self-study. Cellini is no self-student, nor Goldoni, nor Madame de Staal-Delaunay. The psychological value of their work is not thereby impaired; but their influence, their authority, is limited because of the unconscious character of their self-revelation. In this, as in other studies, one must feel that authority and influence belong rather to the deliberate, conscious, coherent observation, than to the spontaneous, unconscious manifestation of natural proclivities. Augustin, Cardan, and later Rousseau and Mill, — these are the autobiographers who have influenced others, and these are the great self-students.

Such a work must have a value beyond any question of religion, above even its mere devotional beauty. Too often has this latter quality in Augustin been made the subject of cult; too often is he treated as a penitential handbook, as an à Kempis with the self-study left out.[1]

If we believe with Taine, "The more a book represents important sentiments, the higher is its place in literature," we see where one should rank the authoritative self-student. Taine, indeed, renders the whole subject more lucid in some further sentences of his

[1] References here are to the full, patristic edition.

Introduction to the *History of English Literature*, sentences invaluable for the crystallization of one's thought. "A literary work," he says, "is not a mere individual play of imagination . . . but a transcript of contemporary manners, a manifestation of a certain kind of mind. . . . Behind the document there is a man." Here should be, unquestionably, our view of the Bishop of Hippo, as of the later cases we know him to have inspired. Looking upon each autobiography, first, sociologically, as "a transcript of contemporary manners," second, psychologically, as "the manifestation of a certain kind of mind," we find the great self-student himself appreciating the fact that, as Taine says, "the outer man is only a clew," and so spending his energy in "visualizing the inner man."

Of many natures is this inner man. When Augustin wrote of his sin: "It was foul; I loved it; I loved to perish," there seemed only one motive in the world for making such an avowal,—religion,—and only one force in a man's life which could produce this naked candor,—the force of religious emotion. But when we turn to our great self-student, Jerome Cardan, we find a new force at work to produce it, a force which was neither the recording historical impulse, nor the emotional religious impulse, but the impulse we now call scientific. A great space of time had passed between the *Confessions* in 430 A.D., and the *De Vita Propria Liber* in 1575. The antique world had crumbled away, the Renaissance

had risen; what we call the modern era had been born. During these eleven hundred and forty-five years, while the religious confession from Augustin to Paulinus of Pella, to Suso, to Guibert, and so following, had been abundant; while the historical memoir, following Cæsar and Josephus, had come to establish itself firmly as a literary fashion; yet there is absolutely no trace of scientific self-study. This fact helps one to realize what a wholly fresh idea came to the Italian physician when he set to work examining himself "as if he were a new species of animal which he never expected to see again." [1]

Unquestionably the scientific self-examination is as modern in thought as it is rare in practice. For instance, the Critical Reviewer does not mention it among his "four classes of egotists." A certain temperament only is moved to it, and only under certain conditions. Yet the names of the followers of Cardan are among the great leaders of thought. He who writes "a natural history of himself," in Herbert Spencer's phrase, is he who knows that self to be worth observation. The entire group of modern English scientists of the nineteenth century write their lives in the scientific or Cardan manner. Earlier autobiographies of the Cardan type are those of Alfieri, Vico, and Edward Gibbon, of George Sand, David Hume, and Rousseau.

The names of Cæsar and Augustin are familiar; they

[1] "Retrospective Review."

stand to the general reader for definite values and for clear ideas. When Jerome Cardan comes under consideration there is no such clear idea. In his own field a great man, a great influence, he hardly belongs to general literature; his work has rather been embodied in the advance of the sciences he professed. The technical character of his mathematical achievements has caused them to become at once incorporated into the bulk of existing thought. His *Book of His Own Life*, written under certain conditions, as we shall understand later, was as much reprobated as the *Confessions* of Rousseau, as much read and as much imitated. It stands in the pages of seventeenth and eighteenth century learning, mentioned by such men as Huet, Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, as among the great intellectual influences of their lives. Yet for reasons which no longer obtain, it has not been translated into English, and is not readily accessible in its French and Italian versions to the general reader.

It is not only for this reason that it has been dealt with in these pages at greater length than any other case, but, because this, our third great type of autobiographer, is purely modern. He is among the first manifestations of what we term the scientific spirit; he is in the forefront of that new order which was to change the face of the universe. His influence on later minds and writings is a scientific influence. A

second reason for analyzing the *De Vita Propria Liber*, with its pendant *De Libris Propriis*, is the character of the document itself. Its information, its attitude, and its logic have been misread, misinterpreted, misunderstood for four hundred years. As a study it is so far in advance of its time, that even one hundred years ago much of the matter would have been incomprehensible. Here is a scientist deeply interested in the brain and the nervous system, and their relation to the physical and intellectual life, and at a date when the existence of such a relation was by no means clearly established. His own brain and nervous system presented a series of the most complicated problems before which he sits in clinic. If his deductions seem wild to us, let us not forget how absurd were his premises. The fact remains that here, in 1575, sits the first psychologist, minutely examining the only case at hand, — a case which, fortunately for us, presents the most salient, individual, and often abnormal features. It is not only that a scientist of the first order is examining this brain; but that the brain itself is of the first order, presenting those definite characteristics and that high quality which make its examination important. A Ribot studying the mental growth of an Aristotle — for Cardan was said to have had the greatest brain since Aristotle — is a combination rare enough, in all conscience. Of perfect originality, this book contains psychological data which have awaited the birth and

development of a special branch of science for their elucidation.

To his contemporaries, to many biographers, the man seems plainly mad. Hallam,[1] the conservative historian of the literature of Europe, thinks that "no man can read this strange book of his own life . . . without suspecting a portion of insanity." Mr. W. G. Waters, writing in 1882, thinks Cardan was subject to periodical insanity, basing this idea on his "recorded belief in a gift of tongues." Tiraboschi considers the form of writing, rather than the material, indicative of unbalanced faculties, following in this the Scaligers, Bayle, and Naudé. Mr. Henry Morley, Cardan's fullest English biographer, dissents from this opinion; and a final verdict must be left to the reader. There is matter the reader must, however, bear in mind: the fact that his point of view has been determined only in the last fifty years. When we come to the statisticians who paved the way for mental physiology, we find M. Quetelet[2] declaring that infinite aid would be given to the study of man if only one would "s'examiner lui-même avec soin, pour déterminer les éléments qui le concernent, et ses limites." This is what Cardan did; this his contemporaries thought him mad for attempting. Mad or impious have ever been the favorite adjectives applied to the pioneer. And it is not too much to say

[1] "Literature of Europe," Vol. I, p. 394.

[2] "Sur l'Homme," pp. 268, 269.

that by reason of his invention of the principle of gathering and collating personal data, Jerome Cardan stands in the same relation to the new psychology as Galileo to astronomy.

These three great types of autobiographer must be introduced before one can consider their followers and imitators, for they serve, indeed, to explain their followers. It has already been stated that the two of them whose work was introspective were sincere. No enemy, even, has called that general sincerity in question; and this fact has had the strongest possible influence in making for sincerity among their imitators. Augustine's motive for sincerity we know to have been the powerful motive of religious emotion. That the scientific motive for Jerome Cardan's sincerity produced equally striking results, remains to be shown by an examination of his work.

# CHAPTER VII

## JEROME CARDAN'S "DE VITA PROPRIA LIBER"

Comparison of Jerome Cardan with Jean Jacques Rousseau has a value beyond that of its obvious picturesqueness. Like elements of character and circumstance in like combinations may produce like results. Both men were born in poverty, were struggling, irascible, hypersensitive, and at war with convention. Both were moody, excitable, neurotic, frail of physique, and full of infirmities. Both were devoted to music, given to sensual pleasures, absorbed and absent in manner, and noted for minor eccentricities. The intellectual powers of the Italian far exceeded those of the Frenchman, nor was there the same inconsistency between his philosophy and his actions as existed between the sentiment and the actions of Rousseau. The reader of the *Vita* need be in no such haze regarding concrete details as the reader of the *Confessions;* yet, again like Rousseau, Cardan, in the phrase of Tiraboschi,[1] approaches philosophy wishing no other guide than his imagination. To Rousseau was given the advantage of literary quality, and that noble instrument of style which must count in the last analysis

[1] Tiraboschi, T. VII, pt. I, p. 417, "E non vuol altra guida che la sua immaginazione."

to make an enduring mark upon the minds of men. Cardan, regardless of the medium in which Dante had not disdained to cast the Divina Commedia, chose to commit the record of his self-study to an arid, if not inelegant, Latin prose, at once unpleasing and obscure. To the peculiar difficulties it offers the translator we shall recur erelong. The obscurity has been increased for his readers by apparent contradictions — apparent only, as will be seen later — and by his commentators' dangerous habit of isolating single statements from the text.

It is this habit, at moments amounting to falsification, which causes such studies of Cardan as Lombroso's [1] and Lelut's [2] to perpetuate lasting injustice. Both of these works are based on certain isolated, single statements given without Cardan's explanations; and both of them dispose of him as a *halluciné*, without taking the trouble to read with an open mind the whole book of his life. In both cases, also, simple natural explanations have been rejected for the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of a favorite theory. Such methods are unworthy of modern science. Tiraboschi, in 1821, might declare it impossible to reconcile the different qualities of a disposition so contradictory as Cardan's,— that a man cannot in the same breath deplore his own gross vices and laud his elevated virtues, cannot be

[1] "La Pazzia di Cardano."
[2] "Le Démon de Socrate."

at once scientifically skeptical and temperamentally credulous. Yet to this generation with its wider knowledge of the far-reaching and subtle reactions of the nervous system, and its greater interest in abnormal individual cases, many of these so-called contradictions have ceased to contradict, but become on closer study the component parts of a markedly typical whole. The value, if not the necessity, of a study of the *De Vita Propria* in this connection has been pointed out by Ribot[1] in these words: " Il y aurait une curieuse étude à faire d'après le De Vita Propria de Cardan, qui était manifestement ce qu'on appelle de nos jours un névropathe et un déséquilibré."

M. Joseph Grasset in his book on the *Demi-fou* repeats and emphasizes this comment; and it will be seen later what generalizations of the psychologist may receive suggestion or illumination from the data scrupulously collected by the Italian physician.

When we realize the fame and position of Cardan in his own day, the oblivion into which his work has fallen may give us pause, and serve to throw some light, perchance, on the elements of an enduring glory. Mr. Waters, one of his later biographers, thinks that Cardan's blind following of Galen, together with his unsound methods of diagnosis, is chiefly responsible for the neglect of his medical writings. Had he kept closer to the school of Hippocrates, in this opinion,

[1] " Psychologie des Sentiments," p. 64, note.

the world of medicine would have owed him much. To Tiraboschi and Morley, the reason lies in the diffusion of his powers and his avidity for mere novelty. Of his mass of work, ethical, medical, philosophical, astrological, there remain only his algebraic discoveries and the present volume, which has for centuries suffered from misinterpretation. Personal reasons for this are not lacking. The definitive edition of *Cardani Opera* (C. Spon, 1663) is prefixed with a study of Cardan by Gabriel Naudé, who saw in him nothing but a madman. Toward the end of Cardan's life his enemies were particularly active; and nothing therefore appeared to dissipate the tradition of the man as established by Naudé and De Thou.

In 1854 appeared Mr. Henry Morley's most accurate and readable biography, entitled *The Life of Girolamo Cardano, of Milan, Physician,* wherein the author, with enthusiasm and out of a wealth of material, has built up a study of sixteenth century Italian life, full and fascinating as a romance. For interest, color, and picturesqueness, the general reader need seek no further. But Mr. Morley's own attitude toward Cardan's self-dissection is displayed when he terms it " the prattle of literature in its infancy." The word "infantile" as applied to Italian literature of the sixteenth century strikes the modern ear as singularly infelicitous, but it is typical of the general opinion concerning the introspective tendency. Although Mr. Morley makes free use of

the *Vita*, he does so, intermingling translation, adaptation, comment, and corrective, in a manner unsatisfactory to the serious student. It seems wiser for our present purpose, therefore, to go directly to the *De Vita Propria Liber* itself; to take this extraordinary document at its face value; to examine it, discarding comment and tradition; and to try to discover from its pages what the man who wrote it really was.[1]

## II

"Since among all the things mankind has been given to follow, there is none more worthy or pleasing than a knowledge of the truth; nor is any perfection possible among the work of mortals but it is greatly the butt of calumny; — therefore, after the example of the philosopher Antoninus, as is believed wisest and best of men, we see fit to write this book of our own life. I asseverate that nothing has been added for the sake of boasting, or for embellishing the matter. Bare therefore of any artifice, and far from arrogating to itself any power to teach, my book concerns itself with a bald narration of

[1] The oblivion in which Cardan rests is best set forth by the statement that his name barely occurs in the Italian Literatures by the Italians Ancona, Bartoli, Settembrini, and Cantù; in similar English studies by J. A. Symonds and Richard Garnett; and in French books by Leroux and others. He has, however, been recently made the subject of Italian study. The one by C. Lombroso is wholly theoretical and *a priori*.

facts, and only comprises my own life, and not tumults like the lives of Sulla, Cæsar, or even Augustus."

In this paragraph the elements and proportions of self-study are well defined and understood. At once it furnishes the reader with a warrant of serious intention, and by its dignified sequence of causes, the love of truth, the personal example of Antoninus, and the final exposition of a perfectly subjective method, permits him to pass confidently to an examination of the facts. These are grouped into chapters classified under separate heads with such titles as *De Statura et Forma Corporis; De Valetudine; Victus Ratio; Vestitus; Delectatio; Mores et Animi Vitia, et Errores;* in such form, as Mr. Waters puts it, "as a scientific writer would arrange the sections and subsections of his subject." Such an arrangement is not common to-day; and for the sixteenth century was unique. The promise of candor which it implied, and indeed fulfilled, was a quality unheard of. Its mere existence bewildered the contemporary reader, causing him to suspect some ulterior motive. In the *Histoire Universelle,* De Thou remarks that Cardan told much more of himself than any biographer could have told, or than is usual among literary men. To quote from an anonymous writer in the Retrospective Review: "He takes the height, breadth, and marks of his person, as a curious traveler would measure the pyramids. A naturalist would thus describe an animal he had never before met with, and never

expected to see again. He writes as if he were giving evidence in a court of justice, and every sentence was an answer to a question put to him . . . under the influence of an imperious sense of duty."

Even to-day, the intensity of sincerity which moves through the pages of this book strangely affects us. The writer seems to stand before Dante's grinning Minos, " che, quando l'anima mal nata li vien dinanzi, tutta si confessa"; and so exact the image that one seems to read in this canto of the Inferno the inspiration to Cardan's vivid and somewhat morbid imagination. However this may be, even an outcry like Naudé's does not stand before such an "imperious sense of duty" with any valid or proven contradictions, but calls attention only to that mass of superstition by which we shall find Cardan surrounded. It cannot be denied that there is placed before posterity in a methodical manner the complete evidence about an extraordinary person, whose temperament, misfortunes, and errors bring him very near the heart of ordinary humanity.

" Introspective observation," says Professor William James,[1] writing of individual psychology, " is what we have to rely on, first and foremost. The word introspective need hardly be defined; it means, of course, the looking into our own minds and reporting

[1] W. James, "Textbook of Advanced Principles of Psychology," I, p. 185.

what we there discover. Every one agrees that we there discover states of consciousness." Upon reading such a sentence one is almost tempted to believe that the dæmon, that tutelary genius of Cardan, when it rapt him away into ecstasies of meditation, opened to him a glimpse of the future, by way of a modern psychology. It is almost as if his Minos were Professor James or Professor Münsterberg in person. His report of his states of consciousness is as complete as, humanly speaking, it is possible to be. With all a great physician's attention to minutiæ, he omits no trifling detail as to food, clothing, feelings, habits, and the changes wrought in them by time. To Mr. Morley this appears but as curious and amusing, to Naudé as evidence of egotism and eccentricity, but to us it bears witness to the thoroughness of a scientific method. Such thoroughness naturally induces repetition, which is encouraged also by the writer's age when the book was written. At seventy-five years, and after a life of internal and external vicissitude, a certain wandering about among the various topics is observable, and this is made the most of by such commentators as Naudé, Bayle, Lelut, and Lombroso. In the same manner, the emphasis Cardan laid upon the supernatural elements in his career, an emphasis which is heightened to account for an otherwise unendurable grievance against life, is responsible for the exaggerated impression of his personality, its charlatanry, its apparent madness. Isolated from the body

of the text, the incidents, dreams, omens, and so on, do seem to take the stamp of an unbalanced mind. Read in their proper place, with the surrounding commentary, it will be found that Cardan rarely denies us the natural explanation of an event. It may have been an earthquake, and not an omen, which caused his bed to shake ; it may have been the drugs which cured him of a gouty attack and not the prayer to San Martino — and so on. In brief, this is a conscientious man of science, who compels himself to set forth all obtainable evidence, whether or not it jumps with his theory.

This is not the method of a madman. And in truth the one clear impression gained from the *De Vita Propria* is the open-mindedness, balance, and vigor of the intellect behind it, an impression which prevails throughout the investigation of Jerome Cardan's physical and mental condition in all its tragic peculiarity.

## III

What then was this man? Let us examine the facts which he has placed before us.

After repeated attempts to prevent it, Jerome Cardan was born into the world,[1] "half-dead, with a head of thick, black hair, and was revived only when immersed in a little warm bath of wine."[2] His mother was a young widow named Chiara Micheria; his father,

[1] Born 1501. [2] Caput II.

Fazio Cardan of Milan, was known as a jurisconsult and mathematician. As a mathematician his grandfather also was noted. It seems scarcely worth while to point out how this instance is added to many others which show the direct inheritance of the mathematical genius, and more particularly the phenomenon of the rapid calculator and his visualizing faculty. Cases resembling Cardan's are mentioned by de Candolle,[1] and there is a very noteworthy later one in that of Bidder, the Calculating Boy. With his appreciation of all essentials needful for a study of himself, Cardan has given two terse, inimitable portraits of his parents.

"My father wore scarlet (contrary to the custom of the town). . . . He was a stammerer in his speech, a lover of various studies, ruddy, with white eyes which saw in the night. . . . He was studious of the works of Euclid, and round-shouldered, . . . and my eldest son, from the hour of his birth, in eyes, mouth, and shoulders resembled him.[2] . . .

"My mother was irascible, of excellent memory and intelligence, short of stature, fat, pious." [3]

The relation between the elderly lawyer and the young widow had long ceased to be harmonious or affectionate. At times Fazio Cardan inhabited the same house as his mistress and her child; then again, after quarrels,

[1] A. de Candolle, "Histoire des Sciences et des Savants," p. 35.

[2] Caput III.

[3] "Mater fuit iracunda, memoria et ingenio pollens, parvæ staturæ, pinguis, pia."

ensued long separations. "Except for their high temper," the son writes significantly, "the parents had in common nothing but their capriciousness in affection toward their child, although equally indulgent."

The vitality of this undesired infant aided him to survive an extraordinary series of ills, none of which, he thinks, is too trivial to be set forth for the understanding of his mind and character. It is a formidable catalogue, in which the modern physician would doubtless detect a certain superfluous and misleading specialization, Cardan probably describing and listing as separate diseases the particular symptons of a single malady. His first nurse died from plague, of which the baby showed the effects. At the breasts of a second he wellnigh perished from malnutrition, but was revived by the care of a third. He was taken from this last nurse, after being weaned, in his fourth year, to a house in Milan, where his parents and his mother's sister had established themselves. Here the child soon began to suffer all the agony which neglect at home and jeers abroad can bring to a sensitive nature. Illness, unkindness, and the obloquy of base birth bit like acids deep lines upon the plate, lines which were to tell in after years. This childhood of Cardan's, in truth, is harsh reading; nor does it seem possible to convey in English the note of intensity thrilling these bald, condensed, aloof Latin phrases of description.

"I was forced to follow and be a servant to my

father, and, notwithstanding my delicate physique and tender age, to pass from great quiet to the hardest and quasi-continuous exertion. . . . I was beaten without reason by both father and mother, and made ill unto the peril of death." This condition finally alarmed his taskmasters, so that after a severe dysenteric fever (due, he says, to eating green grapes in his eighth year) Cardan observes: "Thus ended the hard task of following and serving my father." The beatings also were abandoned, so that later with his characteristic justice he remarks: "When I grew old enough to do things which merited blows they abstained from them." It is apparent that his child's growing ability along lines congenial to the father's tastes began to awaken in him, though late, some interest and affection. He ordered a regimen for the boy's health, began to talk with him and teach him orally many things. The son manifests, it seems to us, an exaggerated gratitude and respect for these attentions; indeed, somewhat like Herbert Spencer, he mingles a perfect candor in respect to his parents' character with much feeling for them. He does, however, say that "toward me my father was of better temper and more loving than my mother." [1]

How frail the little fellow was, how unlike to live, we may guess by such significant statements as that he was neither baptized nor named until his eighth

[1] Caput III.

year, and that then his father was already educating an heir to succeed him. "Up to my eighth year," he says elsewhere,[1] "I had often beaten at the gates of death, but those within refused to open to me." Neither the illness, the neglect, nor the cruel beatings of his aunt Margaret, "a woman," he says, "who seemed to be without skin," [2] — implying "so little pity had she on mine," — were to do more than harass this extraordinary tenacity. Knowing what we know of his physical condition and nervous system, it may surely be taken as an indication of an inherent vigor and balance of intellect that such treatment did not produce idiocy or neurasthenia long before manhood; for had Cardan been a semi-insane case in the beginning, the treatment he received would have soon left no doubt whatever on the subject. That much injury was inflicted by this unnatural childhood on his mature life is indubitable; its definiteness and extent we may be able later to determine.

The history of Cardan's ill health and attendant nervous symptoms would be long to give in detail, and yet should not be ignored. It is largely responsible for the personal impression he made on his contemporaries, and also for the beliefs and superstitions which he seems to over-emphasize. The correspondence of these cannot be well understood without the subjoined table,

[1] "De Utilitate ex Adversis Capienda," pp. 427, 428.
[2] "Mulier cui fel defuisse existimo."

| Physical Conditions. | Nervous Symptoms. |
|---|---|
| **Attempted abortion.** | |
| **Infancy:** Nearly dead at birth. (3 wet nurses).<br>(A) At six weeks old. Plague.<br>(B) At 3 months. Malnutrition. | Normal from 1 year to 4 years. |
| **4 to 12 years old:** Severe sweats, bad circulation. Dysenteric fever, weakness. Headache, palpitations. | Night terrors, screaming, phantoms rising in the room, vision of a red cock. |
| **12 to 26 years:** 1. Fevers, abscess on breast.<br>2. Cutaneous itchings and eruptions.<br>3. Cough, suspected phthisis.<br>4. Tertian fever.<br>5. Catarrh.<br>6. Severe blows on skull, leaving scars.<br>Bitten by a dog.<br>Nearly drowned. | Spasmodic twitchings. Overexcitement. Thoughts of suicide. Dread of impotency. Recurrent dreams. Voices in his ears. Fears of high places, mad dogs, water, and general nervous cowardice. |
| **26 to 70 years:** Gout, hæmorrhoids, anæmia.<br>(Otherwise shows general improvement.) | Head-buzzing.<br>Cessation of phantoms and of visions. |
| **At 72 years:** Slight attacks of pain. | Recurrence of visions and voices. Cessation of dreams. |
| **At 74 years:** Erysipelas. | General and acute nervous prostration. |
| **At 76 years:** Prostration and death. | |

which shows at a glance much that is overlaid in the text. Certain facts not without significance are made plain. The steady improvement in health as he approached middle life is accompanied by a steady de-

crease in definite morbid phenomena, until these are revived by the great strain of his son's tragedy. Success in life admitted of a more generous regimen, and under this many symptoms vanished which had been provoked by malnutrition during childhood. Dissipation, excitement, and overwork developed and accentuated others, and had, no doubt, their share in confirming his nervous habits, such as the spasmodic twitchings and irregular gait. These same symptoms, it will be remembered, were remarked in Dr. Samuel Johnson, and ascribed to the same cause of privation in youth. The physical condition of Cardan governed his outlook on life. He suffered from nervous cowardice, from minor ills arising from anæmia, and from a dread of impotency which remained with him until he was thirty years old. Investigators like Dr. G. Stanley Hall[1] have lately shown us the prevalence of such morbid fears among neuropathic or even among merely nervous youth, to an extent which deprives this fear in Cardan of any individuality, causing it to become merely symptomatic, like the hunger in a convalescent from typhoid fever. The manner in which he sets these data before the reader will serve to show how the attitude of the diagnostician prevails.

"Morbid symptoms were various: first of all, from my seventh to my twelfth year, I roused in the night screaming. . . . During these accesses the heart beat

[1] "Adolescence."

faster than usual. . . . During youth I was no stranger to inherited palpitations, which, though severe, yielded to medical art so that I was entirely released from them. . . . I am very fearful and timorous by nature of all high places and nervous about mad dogs. As I know that pleasure consists in the cessation of pain, if the pain is voluntary, the pleasure can be summoned at will; therefore I bit my lips, or twisted my fingers, or pricked my skin, or pinched the muscle of my left arm, until it brought tears. And thus it is I live till to-day without blame."[1]

Frequent repetition in these passages makes it necessary to condense in the translation, but there are parts which deserve to be given almost at length, and chief among them is Cardan's description of himself:

"Of middle height, with short feet, toes broad at the end, and so high of heel that I could never find suitable shoes, but must always have them made especially, and boots also. Chest somewhat narrow, arms slender. The right hand clumsier, with straggling fingers, from which palmists pronounced me rude and stupid, and I, knowing this, was ashamed. . . . But the left hand beautiful, rounded in form, with long fingers and shining nails. Neck rather long and thin, chin cleft in twain, under lip full and hanging. Eyes fairly small and blinking, save when I gaze upon some object."[2]

[1] "Quo præsidio sine calumnia adhuc vivo." Caput III.

[2] Caput V.

The sentence following is touched by his unhappy hypersensitiveness: "Speech shrill,—if one may trust to the reproaches of those who profess to be my friends,—and yet cannot be heard when I lecture. My gaze is fixed, as one who meditates, my color red and white, my face an oblong, though not large, my upper teeth larger than the lower."[1]

The accuracy and justice of this description can only be appreciated when reference is made to the extant wood-cuts and medallion profile of the great physician. On studying them also one realizes the truth of his summing up: "Of all these things the result in me is nothing noteworthy, which is so true that of the many portrait-painters who have come to delineate me from more or less distant countries, not one found my features sufficiently marked or distinguished, so that he could depict them at a single survey." And to this he adds, as one who has forgotten a detail: "In the base of my throat there is a lump, like a hard little sphere, not particularly conspicuous,[2] derived and inherited from my mother."

## IV

It is not the purpose of this study to dwell upon the varied and picturesque aspects of Cardan's career, nor to describe the vicissitudes of his early days, those

[1] Caput V.

[2] "Sphærula dura non admodum conspicua." Caput V.

romantic incidents of his progress from the position of struggling country doctor to that of physician summoned and consulted by kings. This has been done, and well done, elsewhere. Our concern here is first and foremost with the self-student, with the autobiographer, his method and his results, with the data he gives and the influence he has established. Only such outside incidents will be noted as contribute to our understanding of his psychology.

For many years after his first success the University of Bologna closed its doors against him; nor does this fact surprise us in the light of what we are told. Cardan was amazingly deficient in worldly prudence, and had a gift for making enemies which has been rarely equaled. He united in his proper person the quarrelsomeness of a Romney with something of Whistler's impish caprice. Surrounded from birth by an atmosphere of hostility and contempt, it bred in him an habitual antagonism. As one reads the account of his contests, public and private, and the manner in which they were conducted, the wonder is that he ever rose out of his condition of embittered obscurity.

"It is a singular defect of mine," he observes,[1] "that I will talk of nothing with so much complacency as that which I know to be displeasing to my hearers. And in this I persevere knowingly and willingly; nei-

[1] Caput XIII.

ther am I ignorant how many enemies this sole defect procures me."

And again: —

"I have brought myself to compose my face into the contrary [expression] always; therefore I am able to simulate, although I cannot dissimulate. To the acquirement of this [simulation] I have bent myself with great labor for fifteen perpetual years, and have succeeded. . . . I am too little pious, but rather incontinent in language, and (of which I am sorrowful and ashamed) extremely irascible. And so on account of these things I walk now in rags, now elegantly clad; now silent, now talkative; now joyful, now sad; for in me everything is doubled."[1]

In that section dealing with his attitude during disputes, he notes that he was particularly active and valiant therein, although so nervously timid in other respects; and it is indeed suggestive that his first book, *The Bad Practice of Medicine in Common Use*, was a collection of bluntly courageous truths, especially likely, at the time, to give offense. But all this is not given us in generalities merely. Among the most graphic incidents is that of Jerome Cardan's interrupting, from a back bench, the lecture of his sometime teacher and rival, Branda Porrò, who was giving his class a citation from Aristotle. Cardan declared that the speaker had omitted the negative particle, thus changing the entire

[1] Caput XIII.

sense of the passage. "'No, surely!' exclaimed Branda. I mildly maintained the opposite (meanwhile abundantly spitting according to my custom),[1] whereat he angrily sent for the codex, ordered the passage in question shown, and I read it as it was in common use. Suspecting I played him a trick, reading him one thing for another, he cried out I was deceiving my hearers, and snatched the book from my hands. He began to read, and when he came to the passage in dispute, read it, was silent, and every one was astounded." The manners here seem those of the stable rather than of the lecture room, and it is amusing that certain of his translators do their best for Cardan by causing the offensive word to take the sense of English *phlegm*. But the Latin leaves no doubt. And Cardan, who shows humor as well as pugnacity, writes of this and other like incidents with enjoyment; just as he treats with a certain rough colloquialism his relations with other mathematicians,—" Brother " Niccolò Tartaglia, as he terms him, or the ungainly person to whom Cardan alludes in a letter as " that devil of a Messer Zuanne da Coi " (questo diauolo di messer Zuanne da Coi). Of his brilliant pupil, Lodovico Ferrari, and of Antonio Maria Fior, both algebraists, he speaks with more respect.

Faults of manner and bearing lead the analyst to the

[1] Caput XII, "Ego meo more pituitam quo abundo exercens."

deeper questions of error and vice. He approaches the subject in this spirit:[1] —

"The entire argument is more difficult than any other, and more dangerous to reflect upon; . . . yet, as the readers of lives written by the persons themselves must be convinced that they are genuine and sincere, I have determined in this narration to expose myself. . . . I am not ignorant that nature has created me irascible and libertine; among my chief sins are pride, proneness to rage, pertinacity in contention, imprudence, and desire of revenge. . . . Yet I am truthful, remembering benefits, a lover of justice among relatives and friends, with a contempt for wealth and a great desire of glory after death. . . . Not for any reason have I in good fortune or in happy success changed my customs, nor made myself more haughty, nor more ambitious, nor more impatient, nor a contemner of the poor, nor forgetful of old friends, nor rougher in my manner, nor more elated in language, nor used to more expensive clothes."

Cardan's attitude toward sensual vices irresistibly invites comparison with such other self-students as Augustin and Rousseau. It serves also to confirm us in our impression that a man's attitude toward this subject on paper has been his attitude toward it in life. Jerome Cardan handles for us the sum total of his sins without shrinking, with justice, and with a total absence of pruriency. If nothing else were needed, his treatment

[1] Caput XIII.

of the question displays an indubitable sanity. There are no sentimental outpourings, no sensual analyses, no endeavor to recall to his palate by writing the flavor of vices outworn. The investigation is conducted in an admirable temper, and with an eye single to the interests of the truth. He lays most emphasis upon the serious injury his excesses did to his hopes of advancement in science, as well as to influences surrounding his children. Upon a single phrase which he uses to describe a particular year of his life — "vitæ Sardanapalæ" — his enemies and critics built a bulk of serious accusation. Our present feeling, founded upon a deeper confidence in Cardan's accuracy and sincerity, leads us to believe that he made use of this term to describe a life of general debauchery, and that if he had intended anything specific he would have said so.

"While I deliberated how rightly to live, either I sinned partly from necessity, partly from pleasures offering themselves daily," he says sorrowfully. "Neglecting, on account of an evil hope, my affairs themselves, I erred in deliberating, and more frequently I sinned in the act."

The worst influence in Cardan's life he believed to lie in his habit of gambling. Often he returns to this, to lament the disgraces and troubles it brought upon him, its evil effect upon the future of his sons.

"From earliest manhood I was immoderately given to the game of chess, and having occupied myself therewith assiduously for many years, almost forty, it is not

easy in the telling to explain briefly how much I suffered in respect to my family affairs, with no compensation. My dicing resulted worse, for my sons were instructed in the game and my house often thrown open to gamblers. No excuse remains for this but the poverty of my birth and the distresses of my position, for I, in the relieving of this by gambling, was not altogether foolish. I prefer to serve the truth at all times, knowing well that silence does not excuse sin."[1] Surely these phrases are enough to show plainly that the man who wrote them did not shirk his responsibilities when the full penalty of his children's disgrace fell upon him.

Over the innumerable details of life and habits which the philosopher has left us, this is hardly the place to linger. They form a most curious commentary, and serve to show his passion for minutiæ. That he preferred fish to meat, and that of meats, veal, well beaten with the blades of knives before it was stewed in its own liquor, was his favorite; that he slept ten hours a day when in health, took only half a pint of white wine, watered, with his dinner; that oil suited him and onions benefited him, and that sweets and peaches did not disagree with him,—all these and much more he describes to us.

The student is referred to Mr. Morley's biography, wherein all this information is admirably assorted and digested. When Cardan tells us:[2] "I delight in pen-

[1] Caput XIII. [2] Caput XVIII.

knives, and to provide myself have spent more than twenty gold crowns; also have I spent much money on various sorts of pens, and in preparations for writing, I daresay, no less than two hundred crowns. I love gems, vessels, and table-service in bronze and silver, painted glass globes, and rare books," — we see those tastes which sent him to the gaming-table. He was also extravagantly fond of animals, to such a degree that he places them thus in a list of the pleasures of life: "History, liberty, continency, *small birds*, *cats* and *dogs*, and consolation after death." In his younger days he was shy and morose, dreading the comments on his illegitimacy and poverty, the sneers on his odd manner and appearance. But after fame brought him deference, and he became the physician to monarchs, he assumed a tone of social superiority and expressed his preferences with decision. "I prefer solitude to company, since very few persons are not rascals, and none are truly learned. I say not that I require learned discussion, for all that is a small matter; but why should I ever be obliged to lose my time? For that is what I abhor."[1] And the protest is one at all times echoed by the student.

## V

When Fazio Cardan began to observe signs of an exceptional mind in his son, he became anxious that the boy should pursue a career of law. This seemed to

[1] "Hoc est quod abhominor."

him the best field in which Jerome might develop both his powers of logic and his love for varied information. At the end of the section wherein Cardan has described the regimen of his life, he sets down his reason for making choice of another profession. Assailed and weakened by successive maladies, yet passionately anxious for distinction, he early set to work to study his own constitution and to establish a rule of life. There again are seen his scientific attitude and the flashes of intellectual domination, which were never wholly obscured by his perverse temper and ill-regulated nerves.

"I have remained in this habit from an early age in order that I might preserve life. The study of medicine rather than law aided this purpose, both as closer to an end and as common to the whole world, also to all ages; again, as less artificial and as more conformable to reason, to the logic of eternal nature, and not to the opinions of men. Therefore have I embraced these studies and not jurisprudence."

His profession was followed by Cardan with ardor, though often with caprice, and always with that tendency toward diffuseness and that love of novelty which were his bane. Nowhere in this book is he more interesting than in the chapters dealing with his intellectual growth, from that on *Cogitations as to Perpetuating my Name* to those named *Erudition: How Acquired and Cultivated* and *Five Properties Peculiar to Myself*. In the beginning he was hampered in his work by an insuf-

ficient memory, and was obliged to make notes for everything. "Quantum potui minus memoriæ reliqui quam scriptis," he puts it. But, as appears to be sometimes the case with this function, (and here connected beyond doubt with the early conditions of anæmia displayed by Cardan), after reaching a certain point in age and development his powers of memory became both sure and prodigious, carrying him onward by huge leaps which appeared to him nothing less than supernatural. His Latin came slowly indeed, he says, compared to the rapidity with which he acquired French, Spanish, and Greek — the last chiefly in a dream. The time has gone by when we can join the Scaligers and Bayle in a laugh over this statement. Like many of his statements, it is far more important than could be realized by his contemporaries. The effort made by Cardan to understand and to account for his mental processes, is full of suggestiveness for us to-day. He must have been totally ignorant of the logic of mental development. At this time the circulation of the blood had not been discovered; Vesalius was painfully gathering the data for his anatomy; no such thing was suspected as the nervous system. A powerful imagination like Cardan's might make one or two happy hits, but cloudy indeed must have appeared the wonder of consciousness. That he should have accounted to himself for such phenomena as this sudden increase in memorizing and

visualizing faculty while learning Greek, by a semi-supernatural explanation, is not only reasonable, it is inevitable. The fact of the suddenness, the rapidity, was plain to him; nothing could shake for him the fact. He did not have Professor Charles Richet to assure him, after six years of minute experiment: "There exists in certain persons, at certain moments, a faculty of acquiring knowledge which has no *rapport* with our normal faculties of the kind." No statistical notes existed by which he could compare his own case with others. And when we remember how large a part dreams played in Cardan's life, the connection between the two ideas ceases to be in any manner fantastic.

In many other ways the visualizing power of his imagination bewildered this observer. His perception of the multiplicity of personality deepened for him the mystery of existence. Seeing himself so great a mass of contradictions, like a child's puzzle made of different colored pieces, calm wisdom jostled by unreasonable moods, there are moments when he seems almost about to grasp the idea of the interrelation of intellectual, nervous, and physical conditions. Dimly he perceives the extent of those reactions which have steadily widened their limits for us, till, exhausted by the effort of comprehension, he simply disposes of the subject by placing it frankly in the realm of the supernatural.

He was from the first passionately desirous of fame. "I entered upon the reasons for desiring to perpetuate

a name far earlier than I was able to realize it; for beyond doubt I believed that life bears a double aspect, — the one material and common both to animals and to the race, the other peculiar to mankind, studious of glory and of heroes." Then, with commingled pride and sense of grievance, he proceeds to explain:

"Truly on the one hand nature failed me, hope abandoned me; on the other hand there was nothing on which I owed it to myself to rely, neither on riches, nor on power, nor on firm health, nor on bodily vigor, nor on a troop of friends, nor on any especial industry of my own; nor was I even familiar with the Latin tongue, . . . nor had I anything from my parentage but misery and shame."

. . . . . .

"How shouldst write, I ask myself, things to be read, and of anything to thee noble and noteworthy, so that readers can desire [it]? And in what style, with elegance of substance, so that they may continue to read?"

He glories in his persistency, repeating and dwelling, almost with relish, upon the list of his initial misfortunes and disadvantages.

"I speak of the pleasures of the senses, of pageants, infirmities, the impotency of men, the malice of rivals, of successes not prospering, struggles, conflicts, threatenings from those in power, suspicion of certain people, family embarrassments, lack of many things, dissua-

sions from some, whether real or half friends, and finally the perils on account of heresy which assail me. . . .

"Therefore it is no wonder that, thus compelled, I burned with the love of fame; rather is it a marvel that notwithstanding these reasons this strong desire persists."

These sentences were written at seventy-five, after Cardan had experienced the vanity of all things, including the fame for which he burned.

"It is not hidden from me that these things are matters of indifference for future ages, and especially to strangers; but," he says, and here his mind rises to its full height, "of what else should I speak, having made it clear that there is naught pertaining to mortals which is not vain, like the empty shadow of a dream, except it be those facts which make up the sum of human existence?" Here we note again that sense that "there is nothing more pleasing and important than knowledge of the truth," which has governed the writer throughout, and which gives so deep a pathos and sincerity to his self-delineation. The note of analysis here is depreciatory; particularly so, no doubt, since the book was written after his son's execution for murder; and Cardan, as we have seen, shouldered his full share of parental responsibility for that tragedy. Yet he cannot deny himself one boast:—

"Although I am most timid and cold of heart, yet I am warm of head, and given to perpetual thought,

revolving in my mind things many and great and even impossible." It must have been these great thoughts which gave him happiness in his feverish life; for among his joys he reckons chiefly "the hope of the unexpected, exercises in the various arts, and the many changes and vastness of the universe."

A perpetual hopefulness upbore him, which he took for a special gift of his tutelary genius. This and his independence, in an age when the scholar was too often servile, were two qualities which he regarded as his chief compensation for existence.

Magnificent is his retort upon the sneers and criticisms of this world: "I have lived to myself so far as has been permitted to me, and in hope of the future I have despised the present."

## VI

Before discussing that aspect of the *De Vita Propria Liber* most in dispute, or considering those sections which first caused men like Naudé, Bayle, and Niceron to proclaim the essential madness of the writer, we have at least prepared ourselves by meeting and talking with the person concerned. We have noted his heredity, examined his physique, heard of his illness and the correspondence of certain nervous symptoms, seen him in the lecture hall and among men, and weighed the temper of his mind. Posterity has played the part of alienist to many a great name, but rarely has it been

given so complete a history of the case. Moreover it were well for us to shoulder the responsibility of a verdict, seeing the bias of the contemporary jury; for were our enemies to be the judges of our mental soundness, how many of us would walk free of restraint? Cardan's morbid hypersensitiveness and irritability were joined to a blunt independence and lack of tact, which would have made his path thorny enough without the additional disadvantages of illegitimacy and eccentricity. It was difficult during his life for him to obtain a hearing; the difficulty persisted even after his death. He believed so deeply in that hope of future fame for which he had despised the present, that he was confident he had left behind him a document which was to prove of permanent service to his contemporaries in aiding them to understand the composition and operation of a certain type of mind. It was hardly for them, it is rather for us, to decide if he were justified.

That the verdict upon Cardan, measured by contemporary knowledge, was natural, is not for an instant denied here. Imagine a modern physician going to Cardan or to Cassenate and maintaining that the way to control epidemics of smallpox was to give the disease to every one in a milder form; or that to cure certain cases of deficiency and backwardness in children he had only to remove the small hypertrophied glands situated back of the nose! Can we doubt their opinion of that man's sanity? The need for a retrial of Car-

dan's case lies in the fact that the verdict as it now stands has deprived his data of their weight and value, and the modern student therefore of much that is suggestive.

For here, (it does no harm to repeat the phrase), "by the grace of God," sits the first psychologist, gathering material by the aid of a scrupulous scientific method, and under "an imperious sense of duty," for the furtherance of a science as yet unborn.

That "twofold" nature which he observed in himself, is further displayed when it comes to the question of his religious attitude. This may best be described as orthodox with flashes of skepticism. By temperament credulous, nervous, and introspective, he was perpetually under the correction of an austere and upright intellect. Superstition forever grovelling, intellect striving to lift up superstition and being itself dragged down by the weight, — such is the sculptured group a Rodin might make to picture Cardan's soul. Happiness would seem impossible to a nature with so definite a line of cleavage.

In this book we may observe the souls of many men. In some, superstition itself is radiantly clothed by faith and walks with an uplifted brow. In others, a splendid and naked reason, the freest thing in the universe, stands before us, showing our weakness, and showing us also the purity of that "haute conscience morale placée en face de l'univers"[1] which forms the

[1] E. Renan, "Marc-Aurèle."

religion of a thinking man. But in this unhappy Italian physician, these two forces appear evenly matched and perpetually at war. On every page the struggle is before us. If Cardan recovers from an attack of gout by the aid of prayers and offerings to his patron, the blessed San Martino, he adds nevertheless: "I did not fail to take the proper drugs." If he predicts the death of an acquaintance (he was, unfortunately for himself, given to such predictions), he says: "Not only the stars told me, but I knew it by my medical art." No one appears to have more readily accepted miraculous illusions as coming directly from heaven, yet "fasting," he observes in *De Rerum Varietate*, "naturally prepares men to these things," and he further notices that "solitariness . . . is the cause of all hermits' illusions." He reminds one, in all these things, of that devout Roman Catholic trained nurse who was fervently delighted to give her patient some water from Lourdes, but pasteurized it first. Similar is the contrast, for instance, between this physician's, to us, wild diagnoses and the intelligent, reasonable treatment of his patients. He may decide that asthma is due to an unhealthy temperature of the brain, and that its attacks coincide with the phases of the moon. Yet the treatment he prescribed for his portly, self-indulgent patient, Archbishop Hamilton, reads for all the world like a modern "cure,"— few drugs, ten hours sleep per day, light diet,

little wine, cold baths, and horseback exercise. That this regimen made of the archbishop a new man, surprises us to-day much less than it did his *entourage*. But that a doctor so intelligent as to believe that everything together will contribute to the success of a cure — diet, sleep, friends, sunshine, as well as drugs — should also cast horoscopes and rely on astrology, need not astonish us after all. Credulity appears to be an affair of temperament rather than of intellect; and scorners of Cardan should not forget those eminent scientists who listened so gravely to Mrs. Piper, and who sponsor the Psychical Research Society. Phrenology has counted among its followers quite as many important names as astrology; and besides, credulity, in Cardan's day, was a part of the very fabric of men's minds. Mr. Morley, who is made rather uneasy by it, cites similar attitudes in Kepler, Newton, Pascal, and Tycho Brahe.

The fairness of mind wherewith, as we have seen, Cardan presents all the facts in cases of seeming miracle, is to us but a proof of his serious autobiographical intention; to his contemporary readers it seemed but another inconsistency. If San Martino's intercession cured the gout, why mention useless drugs? Neither can they see anything consistent in Cardan's analysis of the factors which contributed to his success in medicine. His strict following of Galen, whom he imitated in more ways than one, is the first given of these; the

second is experience, " which taught me more," he asserts, " than any rules." The final factor is that insight into the cause of disease which was a gift to him, he believed, of his tutelary dæmon. Like the results of certain mathematical calculations, this insight was not made up of separate steps of reasoning, conscious enough for Cardan to perceive and follow, but belonged to his visualizing imagination. He saw the cause of disease, or the total of a cube root, he maintains, in the fore part of his brain, as if it came in a dazzling light. Of course this statement was received with shouts of derisive laughter. Yet, laying aside the exaggeration which must come from any attempt to attach definite concepts to what is inconceivable to most of us, — to catch and hold any part of that nebulous and delicate haze in which so many of our mental processes are shrouded,— Cardan's description appears to be fairly accurate. The testimony of other rapid calculators bears him out upon this point. Similar statements are given, though less fully, by Descartes, by Pascal, by Isaac Newton, and later by Zerah Colburn and by Bidder, the Calculating Boy. These possessors of this faculty appear to maintain it as a visualizing power of the imagination, presenting to their minds, in one image, the total result of a number of logical steps taken with inconceivable rapidity, and subconsciously. Cardan's statement is but another example of what Mr. Symonds calls " misinterpreted observation"; and our fuller knowledge bears

him out in the accuracy of this observation quite as completely as Cellini's statement about his halo is explained by his translator.

Unquestionably, similar faculties are put in operation by the trained physician during diagnosis. Any one who has seen a great doctor at work, who has observed the glance which at once grasps and fits together an hundred details, while to the alert intellect a clear image is presented, will at once recognize the picture of Cardan before the cradle of the sick child, in the house of Sfondrato. We can see the gabbling incompetents who filled the room, talking of this and that and squabbling among themselves; then the arrival before the frightened father of this unknown doctor,—surely not a reassuring figure, barefooted, poorly dressed, absorbed and brusque; his pause before the cradle of the patient; his examination during a silence of perfect concentration, and then the authoritative pronouncing of the disease. Truth had flashed before that inner eye.

Closely examined, therefore, it may be seen how little foundation these two statements of Jerome Cardan's give for terming him lunatic. That he should have thought them supernatural gifts was not only natural but logical. Since he could relate his faculty to no natural process with which he was acquainted, it must be supernatural. How could one expect him to think otherwise? The anomaly lay in his both possessing the faculty and trying to understand it; his

being, in other words, both an Italian of the sixteenth century and a psychologist of the twentieth.

In the section termed *Properties Peculiar to Myself* he describes the manifestations of his visualizing imagination. Passing into conditions almost of ecstasy during study is another of these properties. Warnings in dreams and from spots on his fingers are minor idiosyncrasies. It is his statement of these peculiarities on which the charge of insanity is chiefly based. But he was made also the subject of fierce attacks because of his confidence in his cures of consumption. Now that we have heard what treatment he prescribed for Archbishop Hamilton's asthma, we can readily believe that his apparent success in certain cases of consumption might well make him confident. It only remains to point, without further comment, to the chapter discussing these cures; for he does not in a single instance omit to tell us whether the patient relapsed and whether he dies of his disease. This entire justice does not bespeak an over-confidence, while it gives us greater warrant for believing him trustworthy.

Cardan's belief in omens and visions was extreme even for his own day, and is perhaps sufficient to warrant M. Ribot in calling him "névropathe" and "déséquilibré." The keynote to a fuller understanding, however, lies in the information we have been given as to his childhood, which links him with other cases of anæmic children in more modern days. Conditions of over-

stimulated imagination and nerves in badly nourished youth are common and sufficiently recognized. Among autobiographers in this respect, Cardan is not alone. Later will be found such instances as those of Guibert de Nogent, of Agrippa d'Aubigné, of John Bunyan, and, nearer our own day, of John Addington Symonds, Samuel Roberts, P. G. Hamerton, and others.

In a footnote, Mr. Morley asserts visions similar to Cardan's in his own childhood, similar both in texture and in the manner of their apparition. An arch of transparent figures, colorless, built up of smoke-like rings, rose out of the carpet from one corner of the room, to descend in another and vanish. Houses, castles, animals, knights on horseback, plants, trees, trumpeters blowing, groves, forests and flowers,— these swept before the half-dreaming eyes of Fazio Cardan's poor little overstrained and underfed child, and thus early habituated him to marvels. A red cock haunted his bedtime hours. With approaching manhood these visions dwindled, but they had stamped his mind with an ineffaceable credulity. Every act of existence was accompanied by its miracle. Howling dogs, croaking ravens, sparks emitted from broken sticks, tremblings of the house, and the seeming non-natural action of fire, water, and wind,— by such incidents the philosopher strove to guide his steps in this obscure and perplexing world.

He was, it will readily be believed, one of those care-

less and preoccupied persons who often seem singled out for the blows of fate. Dogs rushed at him, bricks fell on him, houses he tenanted collapsed. The tutelary genius who saved his life on three occasions was in truth the happiest invention of Cardan's optimism; for existence would hardly have been endurable but for some such shifting of the responsibility. He was affectionate and emotional in all his relations of life,—a respectful and forgiving son, an over-indulgent and devoted father, and a kind husband. Little is told us of his wife save by the *Carmen* with which he bewails her death. He beheld her first in a dream, standing in a garden such as Pulci might describe. When he came to know her, the situation seemed hopeless. "Truly, I said to myself, what am I to do about this maid? If I take her to wife, poor as I am, having nothing, and burdened with her brothers and sisters, I shall perish, since I can scarcely support myself. If I try to abduct or secretly possess her, it will not fail to be known; and her father, the captain, is not like to suffer such an insult to go unpunished. In either case what will become of me? If the best happens, flight must be my task. O miserable me! . . . While these and like thoughts revolved in my mind, it seemed better to die than to live in such a manner."

Their marriage took place among evil omens. The eldest son, Gianbattista, at birth strikingly resembled Cardan's own father, Fazio. He grew up an apparently

harmless, if not very brilliant youth, and certainly gained no benefit from the society of the gamblers and musicians who filled the house. For this, as for the whole responsibility of his children, Cardan acknowledged the blame. "It is true," he observes, " that I am as deaf and blind when I am with my books." Gianbattista went from bad to worse, married a woman of the town; and, after a wretched life trying to support her and her family, he put arsenic into their food at supper. It killed his wife.

This infamy overtook the father at the summit of his fame. He had made a triumphal return from Scotland and his cure of Archbishop Hamilton's case. He had refused the post of private physician to the King of Denmark. In Paris and Lyons, patients with bags of gold ducats came from leagues away to consult him. At the time this blow fell, his health was, comparatively speaking, good; the abnormalities of the nervous system had much diminished; his intellectual energies were at their height. The strain of his son's trial revived his attention to omens. Buzzings in his ears became frequent. "If the argument I entered upon was contentious," he has said, " the buzzing became a tumult of voices." On the day the wretched Gianbattista confessed his crime, Cardan had noticed a red mark on his finger; his bed had been shaken by an earthquake. " When I was sitting in my library I heard with difficulty the voice, telling briefly, of one who confesses his

misery to a priest, choked, moaning in its accent. . . . My heart was torn asunder, broken."

The effect upon the old man was far-reaching. In his son's defense he had spent all his money. There were not wanting those to say that the murderer had availed himself of his father's knowledge of drugs; and at Cardan's seventy years the damage to his medical reputation was irretrievable. He suffered a complete prostration, "during which I could not bear to look upon my books," he writes, ". . . and hate all I heretofore esteemed." He begins once more to talk about his tutelary dæmon, to remember vague mysterious happenings in the past, to turn his eyes upon the miraculous and supernatural world.

Belief in a dæmon was not, of course, original. It came nearer than Socrates, for Fazio had had it before his son. But in Jerome's case it was bound up with his appreciation of his own contradictions. "At times I seem happy and loquacious, at others silent and melancholy, which serves to show the double that I am." The dæmon guided this double nature, gave the vivid, warning dreams, the half-waking dawn-visions, and helped him to take those deep draughts of Greek. The dæmon displayed to him the results of mathematical calculations and the rapid diagnoses in disease. It is much as if he were following Professor James's humorous advice: "Whatever you are totally ignorant of, assert to be the explanation of everything else."

Nothing is more contradictory than the humor of Cardan. He writes often with a twinkle in his eye. Take his account of his reason for abandoning a certain series of public lectures. "In the year 1552, having left in the house a little cat of placid and domestic habits, she jumped upon my table and tore at my public lectures; yet my book of Fate she touched not, though it was the more exposed to her attacks. I gave up my chair, nor returned to it for eight years." And by the way, the various versions of this vivacious little anecdote well display the uncertainties in translation of the *De Vita Propria*. Professor Mantovani renders *catula* as a little puppy, and *super abacum* as the top of a work bench. Mr. Morley calls the animal a cat, which to us sounds more likely, and places the scene of her depredations on the roof of Cardan's house. Two simpler Latin words do not exist, and it serves to show that a full, authoritative translation of the *De Vita Propria Liber* is demanded by the interests of the case. Whether cat or dog, in-doors or out, we may be quite sure that Cardan would have found his pet's action equally ominous.

But omens now and guiding dreams were dulled and broken. There were no more ecstasies of study nor dazzling revelations of truth. Cardan was an old man, poor and lonely. De Thou mentions having seen him in Rome the year before he died, "habillé d'une façon toute extraordinaire." His eccentricities of dress and

bearing were just those we have come to associate with the typical learned man, with the absent-minded, abrupt student. Men nudged each other when they saw this strange old man go by, with the fixed gaze, the uneven gait, the forked yellow beard, talking to himself. So men have looked upon the savant from Dr. Johnson to Theodor Mommsen. "Since no man has ever owned full tranquillity nor peace," Cardan says philosophically, "doubtless he never will."

He wrote the last words of this study after the culminating insult of an imprisonment for heresy. They are written in a spirit of justice; for it is justice he demands as he answers the questions of "that imperious sense of duty." Some bitterness must have left him, some peace befallen when he closed the book. A month later we may write of him as he wrote of his father: "Mens æterna manet." "There remains the eternal mind."

# CHAPTER VIII

## INFLUENCE AND IMITATION

While every one may not agree with Leslie Stephen that "a dull autobiography has never been written," he will at least concede that every important autobiography has been imitated. The degree of personal influence and the extent of this imitation must be glanced at before we leave the general aspects of the subject. In his hand the reader of any personal narrative holds one end of a long chain, which, if he will, he may examine link by link. It has been proved that the attitude which regards the *Confessions* of Rousseau or those of Teresa as isolated phenomena, is erroneous. The space of time intervening between the manifestations of this impulse argues nothing. As logically might we assert that the thunderclap has no connection with the lightning flash, because they do not reach us simultaneously. As a matter of fact, these spaces of time are much briefer than is supposed. Study of contemporaneous autobiographical groups throws much light on the origin of apparently sporadic examples.

It is not too much to say that from the date when the self-presentation became an established form of literary expression, the personal influence of the author became a matter of the deepest significance. No sincere sub-

jective autobiography has been written which has not exercised an influence, directly or indirectly, upon the generations following. Next to the quality of the autobiographical intention the measure of this influence may be taken as a factor in determining its sincerity, in accounting for its survival. If the document under our consideration has exercised no traceable personal influence on later similar documents, we may have warrant for doubting its underlying sincerity, for questioning its value. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but they are few.

The objection that it is humanly impossible to embrace all extant autobiographical material in the compass of a single survey, and that the omission of one document nullifies the whole work, is thus answered by the fact. Selection of cases becomes not only natural but advisable, according to the laws underlying the cases themselves. Thus we may rest secure in the knowledge that if we have lost little in the records of Æmilius Scaurus or Quintus Lutatius Catulus, we have lost much in the *Commentaries* of Sulla, with their acknowledged influence over the mind and style of Cæsar.

Turning to our three archetypes, Cæsar, Augustin, and Cardan, we see at once the confirmative proof of their influence, traceable, both directly and indirectly, from record to record, from mind to mind. Blaise de Monluc, *maréchal de France*, acknowledges his indebt-

edness to the example of Cæsar in a plain statement at the head of his book. His *Commentaires* were termed by no less a person than Henri IV, *Le Bible des Soldats*. The manner as well as the matter of the book, even over the stretch of centuries, preserves a certain spurring energy. It is a manual of military behavior, of personal courage, written for the era when the individual counted for much on the field of battle. "Arms and the man" is Monluc's theme; he counsels, he warns, he exhorts. "O capitaines, mes compagnons!" he cries, see how I fared, and felt, and overcame! To-day, when war is a question of money and machinery rather than of men; when it is a rare and distasteful episode in the life of an individual or of a nation, one forgets that it was once an absorbing and splendid daily business. So Monluc regarded it. "M'estant retiré chez moy en l'age de soixante-quinze ans, pour trouver quelque repos après tant et tant peines par moy souffertes pendant le temps de cinquante-cinq ans que j'ay porté les armes," begins this sixteenth century soldier, disdaining to apologize for any lack of the literary habit, and yet adding: "Je prie ceux qui les liront de ne les prendre point comme escrits de la main d'un historien, mais d'un vieux soldat, et encore gascon, qui a escrit sa vie à la vérité, et en guerrier."

Unforgettably vivid are his pictures, even through the clouds of antique, involved French. Though Monluc's life was all but passed in harness, yet his volumes are

no mere bald records of sieges and skirmishes. He is subjective and minute to such a degree that one wonders if some study of the individual warrior, as such, did not really underlie his purpose. His own constitution, physical and mental, passes under close observation; his energy, his cruelty to the enemy, his severity to his household, his vanity, his wounds, his fevers, their treatment, their effects, — nothing escapes him. When his tactlessness to his sovereign does him disfavor, he comments on it: "O qu'un homme qui vit parmy les grands doit estre sage!" he warns his readers. Boasting of his savage courage and his feats of daring cruelty, he yet avows: "Que je me trouve, en voyant les ennemis, en telle peur que je sentois le coeur et les membres s'affoiblir et trembler. Puis, ayant dit mes petites prières latines, je sentois tout-à-coup venir un chaleur au coeur et aux membres," and in the avowal shows an experience we notice also in Lord Wolseley. This account, and the description of a wound from an arquebusade, which "broke his face all in pieces," serve him as texts for long analyses of religion as an aid to courage, and of the surgical resources of the battlefield at that time — analyses which go beyond the surface into the psychology of the subject. In fact, Monluc's extraordinary combination of subjective self-delineation with almost an epic touch in crises of excitement, caused his book to have an instant power over a large circle of lay and military readers. In Paul Courteault's *Monluc*,

an admirably thorough study, little material has been produced to alter the total effect of the *Commentaires*. Courteault himself thinks that Monluc was more calculating and complex than he would avow; that his whole figure, possibly, is too simple, too idealized.[1] And, with that ignorance of psychological bases which so often hampers the critic in his conclusions, Courteault takes pains to point out that, while Monluc wrote primarily for apologetic reasons and to establish another view of certain of his actions, yet "il étalait avec une franchise terriblement naive ses actes les moins recommandables." The adjective *terriblement* here is very illustrative of the *terre-à-terre* attitude of the historian, even when his critical work is authoritative. Courteault does us lasting service by the connection he establishes between the Marshal's work and that of Martin du Bellay. From du Bellay, Monluc learned method and arrangement, and he revised his book by the aid of the *Histoire de Notre Temps* of Guillaume Paradin. Unquestionably, the *Commentaires* served to whet that sixteenth century appetite for war stories which, Courteault thinks, gave an impetus to the whole literary movement of the French *mémoire*.

However that may be, an outbreak of imitations followed Monluc, military and military-political. Such are the *Mémoires* of the Ducs de Sully and La Rochefoucauld; such also, frankly inspired by Monluc, is that

[1] P. Courteault, "Monluc," page 612.

of Bassompierre. But Bassompierre is not a man of one idea. Longing for military glory, he yet endangered his ambition by his incurable giddiness of mind. He was a creature of humor and of wit, with a lucid and vivacious style and touches of modern irreverence. No one can forget that Saint-Simon, reading in his tent the *Mémoires de Bassompierre*, was roused by it to write his own greater *Mémoires*. Knowing Saint-Simon, we turn to his predecessor expecting to find him at least the same kind of a man, and his book of a similar texture, stiff, serious, dignified. Nothing more unlike the truth can be conceived; no man more unlikely to affect Saint-Simon could be imagined. Bassompierre is everything Saint-Simon most disliked, distrusted, and deprecated. He is flippant, he is dissipated, he is irreverent; he dared employ toward his sovereign a tone of lively repartee. He was never free from money difficulties or undignified amours. There is only one apparent ground of sympathy between these two men: in the pages of Bassompierre, as in those of Saint-Simon, questions of prerogative, caste, and court etiquette appear treated at disproportionate length. For the rest, had we read that Saint-Simon, the rigid, the ceremonious, the bulwark of the divinity of kings, threw the volume of the impudent Bassompierre across his tent with outraged indignation, we should have been less surprised than to be told he read it with a delight which spurred him to imitation.

The *Mémoires de Saint-Simon* form a historical monument, dominating and visible as the pyramids. Others have laboriously climbed its seventy-two stories, surveyed it, measured it, tested the contents; in this place it must perforce remain merely a cloudy bulk outlined against the horizon. Of the builder we are told only that his youth was somewhat delicate, that his marriage was happy, and that he was fond of his father-in-law. Little else is written of the personality of Saint-Simon himself, whose aim is political and historical, — in fact, the notes were at first intended to illuminate some definite history. A certain picture, of course, is gained of the man's individuality from the extraordinary individuality of his work. One would know much of Gibbon from the *Decline and Fall*, even if there had been no autobiography. Saint-Simon's passion for questions of prerogative and for the minutiæ of court ceremonial, shows us the formal temper of his mind; while the picture he gives us of himself in other small ways, his biographer, M. Gaston Boissier, thinks complete and true. The book is prefaced by an essay demonstrating his theory of history, and showing his fear lest persons or events should be forgotten or misunderstood by the generations to come. It was the *Journal de Dangeau* which gave the author at once a plan and a framework; Dangeau's bald, dated statements became the beams and joists of Saint-Simon's immense edifice. A massive and complete structure, it is composed of in-

numerable fragments representing events and portraits. No figure of importance — of importance we mean to Saint-Simon — but is carved upon its stones, in relief, salient, vivid, detailed. Its fullness and thoroughness, the bigness of its plan, and, above all, its success, have had their influence on every reader placed in like position. It became the measure and the mould of the later court record.

D'Argenson imitates Saint-Simon in minuteness, though his details have never the authority of his model. In French political life thereafter, a *mémoire* became almost one of the conventions of a certain eminence; just as a man on a height may be expected to report to those below what he sees from his position. Knowledge of human nature should show us that not one of the latter-day political *mémoiristes*, be he Barras, Guizot, Marmont, Metternich, Pasquier, Talleyrand (to name but few), sat down to his work without a thought of the great exemplar. It is a long walk from Cæsar to Talleyrand, yet the path is plainly marked over the years.

The simplest, the most direct case of personal influence and imitation has, naturally, been the first presented, in the hope that it may lead to convictions on the subject of influence in general. Proof in chapter and verse is not always forthcoming; the subject himself may be ignorant of an act of imitation which seems plain to the observer. Man is here yet again the child

at play. Once the student of these narratives has come to cultivate a feeling for personal influences, difficult as they may be to analyze and define, there grows up a conviction on the whole subject that is deep and unshakable. It is the same as in life.

My friend James meets and forms an intimacy with my friend John. A year later one notes, perhaps with amusement, perhaps with annoyance, how the chambers of James's mind echo to the sounding footsteps of John. One cannot pick out a phrase of James's as borrowed from John, nor any special one opinion of James's as adopted from John; but one feels that whereas James had been, for instance, utilitarian, he is becoming hedonistic; where he was doubtful and qualificative, he is now violently dogmatic; or that whereas he formerly denounced Wesleyanism or the tariff, he is now primed with too-fluent argument in favor of those beneficent institutions. Unquestionably, James believes that he has arrived at this change of view of his own mind, or, at the most, that talk with John has only modified his opinions; but his friends see and hear John throughout the temperament and mind of James.

Our self-biographer is James to some former self-biographer John. Consciously or unconsciously, according as temperament or intellect has most submitted to the influence, he will be found in the grip of his friend. His denial matters nothing; like Rousseau, he may protest

an entire originality. In such cases one cannot point to open acknowledgment like Saint-Simon's of Bassompierre, or Monluc's of Cæsar; yet one's conviction of that influence remains.

The idea known in religious phrase as "bearing testimony to the workings of God" in an individual, is original with Augustin. It has never been expressed with more feeling and freshness than in his opening chapters. Repeated, reiterated by ardent readers of the *Confessions* as the reason urging them to a like outpouring, it is sometimes alleged with Augustin's name as avowed sponsor to the effort, sometimes with the sponsorship only of Augustin's idea. To examine the links of one among many chains, it is felt and present in Guibert, in Teresa and Huet, and so linked to the Quietist, Jeanne de la Mothe-Guyon. The extraordinary likeness of Madame Guyon in idea, in attitude, even in phrase and expression, to the group of English Quakers headed by George Fox, has not passed unobserved by the historian of religious movements. Such similarities have been regarded heretofore only in two ways, either as single isolated phenomena, or as minor and unimportant eddies in a large single current. Much remains to be done in the study of the personal forces exerted by one individual upon another individual in the matter of religious emotion, which the written document preserves and concentrates. Of so much power is this personal force that if the conditions directly

surrounding it are unfavorable, it is apt to pass through the unfavorable medium and to manifest itself at a distance. This is just what happened in the case of Madame Guyon, as Quaker historians have pointed out. The state of society in France during Madame Guyon's career as a religious reformer, was such as to preclude any lasting impression. The sparks of incipient fervor were soon smothered; all, that is, save those across the Channel, which fell upon tinder ready to leap into flame. Any examination of the characteristics of this movement belongs to another section, but it should be noted in passing that the whole subject of seventeenth century piety remains a field rich in suggestive similarities and differences.

Not for an instant must it be supposed that the lines of influence we have just followed for the reader are the only ones springing from our self-student archetypes. It would be more accurate to draw them as figures are drawn in antique missals, surrounded by rays, rays centring in the figure itself and spreading widely to zenith and nadir. The literature of each civilized country will be found pierced to the heart by one of these rays. The Cæsar influence we chose to examine in France; it might have been examined in Italy with equally convincing results. The Augustin power is transmitted along two main currents, separate and distinct. On the one hand he is a church figure, a personality canonized and typically Roman Catholic, a

father, owned by the church with a peculiar and filial tenderness. On the other hand, his vital and independent piety causes him to be the favorite reading of the zealot and the reformer. No influence has been stronger at the crucial moment of religious change than Augustin's; no power is felt to rise more freely above all questions of creed and sect, to work more intensely upon the basic instincts of the human soul. Dissenter, Protestant, Quaker, have one and all dreamed over his *Confessions* their visions of an inspiring and ennobling devotion. Catholic and heretic alike have turned at his voice. The extent of his personal fascination, observed through their testimony, would fill a volume with proper names. In the compass of the present study we have sought to present the example of only one characteristic and typical manifestation.

Qualities which lead a reader to imitate the historical-objective record, or the religious-subjective confession, are simpler and less rare than those stimulated by a scientific inquiry. The personal influence of Jerome Cardan, therefore, is more difficult to trace. The mere possession of the scientific spirit causes a writer to be slow in acknowledging personal influence in general. Moreover, in the first two cases the purpose itself is considered to be sufficient. Because Cæsar wrote commentaries Monluc writes them; because Monluc, Bassompierre; because Bassompierre, Saint-Simon. In the same manner the pious heart leaps to follow Augustin,

never doubting that fervor will supply all deficiencies of intellect or method.

No such good intention will suffice for the requirements of scientific self-study. A high degree of impersonal aloofness, close observation, an ardent love of abstract truth, — the combination of such faculties is rare at any age. It was so rare in Cardan's day that he fell at once under the suspicion of insanity. Yet the very men who doubted the sanity of the *De Vita Propria Liber* were the first to come under its power. On minds of a certain calibre, the effect of this book resembled the effect produced by Rousseau two hundred years later. It provided an outlet for the expression of special prevalent states of thought and feeling. The reader beheld his own chaotic, inarticulate feelings take form, and move and speak. The intellectual and learned man for a hundred years following gained from this volume of Cardan's an increased respect for " the divinity, the ruling faculty within him."

The famous Huetius, Bishop Huet of Avranches, devotes a part of the last chapter of his *Commentaries* to discussing the relative candors of Augustin and Cardan. Deeply interesting it is to see that although the first has his affection, the method of the second has become his model. Similar acknowledgments to the *De Vita Propria Liber* are made by Dr. Calamy and by Richard Baxter, but more often we find an imitation without acknowledgment. The Cardan method is very

marked in such cases as Herbert of Cherbury, Sir Symonds d'Ewes, the lawyer, and, rather later, John Flamsteed, the astronomer royal. Bayle, in his article on Cardan, comments on the effect which the "*dernière naïveté*" of this study produced on contemporary minds: the fashion of Latin self-biographies followed close on Cardan's heels; his friend Niccolò Tartaglia, the algebraist, and Vesalius, the anatomist, left much, though inchoate, autobiographical matter. At the head of this later group of self-students stands Cardinal Bellarmin, who shows a noteworthy attention to physical and mental details. Suggestive also is the tract by Lodovico Cornaro, called *Discorsi della Vita sobria*, which made its appearance at about the same date. No more, no less than the exposition of Cornaro's dietary theories, it shows at least how such topics were in the air. Early in sixteenth-century Italy there was a strong wave of real scientific feeling and interest, affecting even natures wholly removed from it, like Cellini. There is something in the minuteness of Cellini's self-examination which, however unconsciously, serves to display his susceptibility to the prevalent influences.

Whatever motives lay at the bottom of Rousseau's *Confessions*, direct imitation was not among them. Sincerely was he convinced that the undertaking was entirely original. There is no evidence that Jean-Jacques was given to this particular kind of reading. Nevertheless, one must believe that he fell more or less under the

power of an ebbing wave, which, two hundred years before, had been set in motion by the Italian doctor. His peculiar temperament, so like Cardan's at many points, responded quickly to the idea. His *Confessions* gave the movement fresh impetus and revitalized its energy. What Cardan had been to vital natures, Rousseau became in his turn. In England especially, where no subjective work of any value other than the religious had existed, it was a revelation. On a nature, for instance, so deep and austere as George Eliot's, the effect of Rousseau was almost religious, and hers is but one of the many cases which crowd the mind at the mere mention of his name. Few of these natures, however, have paused to ask why the effect upon them of the *Confessions* was so crucial; above all, what quality linked the work to the avowed religious confession. It is not, in any sense of the word, a pious document. Rousseau, like Harriet Martineau, has " snapped his chain and is a rover on the broad, bright, breezy common of the universe." No stern, commanding sense of a personal God moves through his pages; reading which, however, many a soul has quailed and cast a doubtful look behind. It has been suggested that this crystallizing touch of Rousseau's, this religious effect of the *Confessions*, is due primarily to the emotion with which they are permeated. This is the view of the literary theorist, that a common accent of emotion links Augustin and Rousseau. But is it emotion only which has laid so powerful

a grip over souls often past the emotional period of life? Is it not, rather, that Rousseau, like Cardan, freshly arouses the terror and the mystery of personality? Is it not the result of introspection, which brings so deep an awe? The sensitive nature reads what this man is, what with unwinking eyes he sees when he stares into the depths of that clouded mirror of self, notes " that invincible remnant of the brute," — to use George Eliot's phrase, — feels irresistibly dragged to do the like, and is afraid. Terror at the family likeness he discerns between his own leash of yelping passions and those of the writer, — terror and shame are the first emotions; but they are rapidly put to flight by the uplifting consciousness of renewed understanding and power, by the inspiration of a high candor and sincerity.

Thus it would seem that the most religious element of the religious confession is its high quality of candor; and the influence of Rousseau over the reverent mind would seem to be largely the influence of a courageous candor, like tragedy, purging the soul with pity and terror. And when the scientific self-study produces a degree of serious candor approaching, or even surpassing, the religious confession, its influence, like Cardan, like Rousseau, is an influence both enduring and intense. In our own day, it has made steadily for the better psychological understanding of special cases, persons, and conditions. The whole of that group of English scien-

tists of the nineteenth century write their lives with the scientific intention. When we come to examine them as a group, we shall note the permeating effect of the Cardan intention. Whether or not we believe with M. Ribot that " Cette manie de l'analyse personnelle est devenue de nos jours une maladie . . . sous l'influence d'un excitation nerveuse excessive, du raffinement intellectuel et de l'énervement de la volonté "; or, in other words, whether we believe the manifestation to be one of weakness or strength, health or disease, we see it here in possession of intellects indisputably balanced, healthy, and strong. Herbert Spencer alleges practically the same reason for writing as Jerome Cardan: " It has seemed that a natural history of myself would be a useful accompaniment to the books it has been the occupation of my life to write." His method, though infinitely more diffuse, is precisely the same, and his two immense volumes, for thoroughness, veracity, and scrupulous minuteness, form the culminating achievement of scientific self-delineation. We are too close to him now to realize the value of such a "natural history," but coming generations will find in its pages a storehouse of facts relative to a great intellectual movement and its effect on a certain type of mind. The censure of M. Ribot, therefore, should never keep any ardent soul from a similar piece of work, if he is moved to it by a genuine autobiographical intention.

Instances of personal influence along special lines are

readily found ; their study will repay the curious. Like the case of Saint-Simon and Bassompierre, the ground of men's sympathy is often hard to hit. Nothing is so calculated to upset our preconceived notions of a man's character as a knowledge of his friends. The sureness, the composure of Gibbon were to Mark Pattison the most bracing and salutary example; he read the life, he declares, a hundred times; it became the very Bible of his college career. The greater case of Mill and Marmontel has received much obtuse comment, not the least of it from the pen of Professor William James. Facts show that the extraordinary education of John Stuart Mill resulted in a reactionary nervous condition taking the form that he believed himself incapable of feeling any emotion whatever. During this state of mind, and in the most profound depression, he read Marmontel. The literary quality, the accent, the delicacy of Marmontel's feeling not only produce a volume of undying felicity and charm, but serve to compensate the reader for a lack of some important qualities. Marmontel was a man wholly conventional and somewhat naïf; he has no sense of general conditions, no appreciation of the trend of events; he lacks robustness, he lacks intellectual manliness. But poor Mill had too much intellectual manliness, he had too much of one sex; it was the woman in him that had been starved indeed. The very sensitiveness, the very high-pitched note of these emotional pages, seemed fresh, revivifying, to the susceptibilities

of such an one as Mill. He read the wonderful passage which relates how the young Marmontel, hearing of his father's death, rides back alone over the mountains to his farmstead home, to be received by his young sisters and his weeping mother as their sole hope; how he is braced under the responsibility, and how, a boy, all overcharged, he vows inwardly not to fail them, not to fall from the consecration of that moment. The feeling and sincerity, the high accent, communicated in the exquisitely flexible style, roused emotion in Mill, revived, inspired him. To us, reading with an open understanding, the facts are convincing; and Professor James's scoff — "Heaven save the mark!" — seems both gratuitous and undeserved.

There are other parts of Marmontel which have not lost their power to charm. Who can forget the description of his grandmother: "Cette bonne petite vieille, le charmant naturel! la douce et riante gaieté!" or his pleasure on seeing his baby take its first steps, "un plaisir," he charmingly avows, "que la bonne nature a rendu populaire!" or the little visit he paid to Madame de Pompadour, when the great lady so gracefully differentiated her greetings. Surely the Marquise has never seemed so human and so likable, and we know she must have had likable moments. Let us rejoice at our privileges, then; that with John Stuart Mill we too may share the friendship of Marmontel.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN ITS RELATION TO FICTION

The relation of autobiography to fiction has its simple as well as its complex aspects. On either hand it lies open to much exaggeration. The observer, in the first heat of his enthusiasm, is apt to be tempted by striking points of contact to over-emphasize the relation where it exists, and to assume or create one where it does not. It is at no time an easy matter to determine whether *A* is the immediate result of *B*, or whether *A* and *B* are mediately the result of *X*. To claim that the imaginary autobiography — *Robinson Crusoe*, let us say — owes its being to some genuine autobiography would be to claim far too much. More exact would it be to say that the " I " novel — a form of narrative congenial to the direct and fertile invention — owes to its simplicity its predominance in earlier fiction over the more complicated forms. Though one cannot assert that Gulliver or Crusoe was suggested to Defoe or Swift by some like actual record of travel and adventure, yet for the novelist the suggestiveness of the personal narrative goes deeper than the reader is apt to think. Whole fashions in fiction have followed some autobiographical prototype, and, as we shall find, there are authors indebted to

such documents not merely for incidents but also for treatment, for character, for atmosphere.

The entire school of romance dealing with crimes and criminals and their detection, was directly the result of that group of *mémoires* by the French *agents de sûreté*, of whom the best known is Vidocq. The others, Fouquet, Canler, Claude, and so on, are as full of criminal incidents, but they lack both the color and the character. *Les Misérables* contains chapters, scenes, pages stamped by Vidocq. Balzac acknowledged that he owed Vautrin to Vidocq; Charles Dickens, less directly, went to him for *Great Expectations*. The man himself appears in Gaboriau as Lecoq, and the fascination of his *Mémoires* seized upon Poe in America and Conan Doyle in England. Professor Chandler, in his *Literature of Roguery*, gives full lists of the minor cases following this manner, though he devotes little space to Eugène Vidocq himself. Yet the man personally is worthy of study; his four volumes are not merely a repository of criminal tales, but are full of curious psychological data. Vidocq was himself a criminal, a thief turned thief catcher. He makes the most for his readers of the fact that he was innocent of that particular crime for which he was first arrested, but he owns to forgery, highway robbery, and swindling, indulgently terming them his wild oats. Let us not be too severe on him for this attitude, remembering what type of sin the great Benjamin Franklin called *errata*, or that Father McCabe severely

reprimands Augustin for exaggerating such " youthful follies " as lying, stealing, and licentiousness. It is hard to please everybody; and Vidocq was successful enough later in life to afford to be indulgent toward these youthful offenses. His great natural intelligence causes his every page to be thorough; and he has a French love of form in classifying and arranging his material. His book is very orderly; he cites his own misdeeds as necessary to its completeness; he was proud of and took pains with his style. An immense vanity does not interfere with his presentation of the facts. Physically he was one of the most remarkable of men, with a tremendous frame and untiring energy and vitality; mentally his flashes of imagination show him to have had, at moments, powers much above his task; yet he asked for no other in life, and throughout the instincts of the chase predominate. His facial mobility, and his mimetic faculty, which Gaboriau elaborates in Lecoq, were genuine and extraordinary possessions. In Charles Babbage's *Passages from the Life of a Philosopher* there is an account of a visit paid by the author to Vidocq for the purpose of ascertaining the extent of his muscular and facial control. Babbage, a mathematician and the inventor of Babbage's Calculating Machine, was one of those harmless-necessary persons with a passion for special information; he was indefatigable in experiment, — roasted himself in an oven, picked locks, and deciphered cryptograms; — and we have every rea-

son to rely upon his honesty. His description of Vidocq is full and treats of him as a natural phenomenon. If there had been any exaggeration about the police agent's ability to change his face or lower his height at will, we may be sure this industrious philosopher would have found it out.

To open Vidocq's *Mémoires* for the first time recalls the lady who found *Hamlet* so full of quotations. On one page this novelist, on another that, has mined ore for his purpose. As the author personally sinks rather out of sight in the last two volumes, his place is filled by some of the best criminal stories in the world. In this respect, though in no other, he is approached by M. Claude, who is also a storehouse of ingenious plots. Very different from Vidocq, of whom he heartily disapproves, M. Claude deprecates the sensational, and conducts his own criminal investigations in a manner less brilliant, though more sociological. His accounts of Lacenaire and Troppmann are full of value as studies of perversion, and have been so used by French criminologists. And M. Claude is not without his modest boast that his book provided Eugène Sue with the material for the *Mystères de Paris*.

If Vidocq and Claude are parents to a thankless brood, what shall we say of the eighteenth century prisoners, Latude and Trenck? Tom Sawyer knew them, we remember, but we know only their grandchildren. No imprisoned hero of romance, from Monte Cristo to the

modern Russian Kropotkin, ever went through in his own person a tithe of what befell these men. Compare Prince Kropotkin in his *Autobiography of a Revolutionist*, and we see how, even at its worst, the world has changed. The incredible cruelties and brutalities told in these two narratives, still hold poignancy for us between the covers of their dumpy, little brown volumes. Of the two, Trenck is the more vigorous and interesting, Latude the more human and piteous.

Frédéric de Trenck was an impetuous young man, in strength and physique a giant, whose vanity and self-confidence are sufficient to permit him to translate this *Histoire de mes Malheurs* from his native German into excruciatingly bad French. His impudent folly at the outset gained him the steady enmity of Frederick the Great, which was increased by his mishandling of his case. However one may admire — and admire one must — Trenck's vigor, ingenuity, and courage; the buoyancy with which he bore the weight of sixty-three pounds of chains, in a cell where he could hardly stand up or lie down; the self-control which helped him to preserve his reason during such torture; the endurance, the patience with which he tunnelled the earth over and over again; yet one cannot help feeling that all this energy was wasted for the want of a little common prudence. To the end he is absurdly credulous, a dupe of the first comer, and continually losing,

by some signal folly, the reward of months of patient labor.

Poor Henri Masers de Latude, on the contrary, was a weakling in mind and body. His vacuous, giddy, and indiscreet disposition makes the more pitiable his incredible sufferings. To punish Trenck, one could imagine, afforded the monarch a certain satisfaction; it was like punishing a particularly stiff-necked and vigorous boy. But in the grasp of authority, Latude seems like some helpless and maimed animal which yet cannot die. He is landed in the Bastille as the result of an idiotic attempt at a practical joke upon Madame de Pompadour, — just the sort of empty-headed impertinence which to-day might get the perpetrator into the station house over night. Disorderly conduct would be the very worst we should call it; this man paid for it with the better part of his life. After escaping from his first imprisonment, Latude conceives the brilliant idea of writing a grandiloquent letter to Madame de Pompadour to tell her where he is. This amazing piece of foolishness leads at once to his recapture; and thereafter the poor wretch spends thirty-five years in prison and in lunatic asylums, suffering every physical and mental torment. If he had only done something to deserve it, — the rheumatism, the sores, the threatened blindness, — but he had merely been guilty of an act of impertinence toward a king's mistress. The story, as we read page after dreadful page, is like nothing so much as watching

an insect imprisoned in a tumbler, stupidly, persistently bumping itself against the impenetrable glass. He is so utterly weak and helpless, and he is so indomitably persistent. Like Trenck, he is capable of endless ingenuities; he manufactures lamps, rope ladders, etc., out of food, clothing, medicine; he goes beyond all that was ascribed to the Abbé Faria by the imagination of Dumas. Our pity should not let us forget that twice his own indiscretion ruined his chances of release; and one has a distinct sensation of surprise when he is finally set free, to recover from the heirs of Madame de Pompadour compensation to support him during the rest of his ruined life.

Latude writes in a spirit of piercing bitterness unknown to Trenck, who was something of a philosopher. The narrative added its drop of oil to the inflammable feelings of the day. To read it gives one a shudder, it is so clear a forerunner of revolution. Just as Mademoiselle de Montpensier, in her *Mémoires,* when she gives rein to her conscious and unconscious arrogancies, causes us to comprehend as never before the complete and overwhelming effronteries of her order, so poor Latude, frenzied with wrong, gives us a glimpse into the mind of an arousing people, and a glimpse more terrifying than can be conveyed by any descriptions of les Noyades, or citations of *Ça ira!* In vain does fiction about the French Revolution try to communicate that thrill. A sense of unjust, intolerable wrongs and in-

human cruelties was behind the pen of Latude, lashing it on.

Thus is seen the fascination which is responsible for the imprisonment-and-escape story from the Abbé Faria of Dumas to the Siberian exile. Trenck, Latude, Leonora Christina in the Blue Tower, and that part of Casanova describing his escape over the leads of Venice — no fiction on the subject but has taken incidents from these. Seldom in the twenty-two volumes of *mémoires* which Alexandre Dumas has filled with anecdote and description, does he mention the sources of reading for his novels. His own figure is painted therein in crude, staring colors, as bright as life,— a figure out of Balzac and the *Comédie Humaine*. Part Napoleonic soldier, part San Domingan negro,— ye gods of the drama, what an heredity! — he seems to us a savage tale-teller, seated at the camp-fire, holding his companions breathless. Alternately lazy and energetic, sensual and shrewd, he had all the undiluted primitive forces of huge vitality and huge laughter. At twenty, he sets out, like Francis Bacon, to learn everything, — although learning, in Dumas' case, was the mere accumulation of material. In his romances, there is the visualizing power of the narrator, rather than the lore of the antiquarian. One notes no such careful research as may be found, for instance, in Flaubert's *Salammbô;* but how much the greater gift for seizing, for revitalizing the individualities of the past!

A hint is at any time sufficient. He hears the name of a neighbor to Louise de la Vallière; it is Bragelonne. A remark dropped in a letter is enough for the lively sketch of Mademoiselle de Montalais. And there is also the power of dramatizing the fact. Take the different versions of that protest uttered to Louis XIV by the exasperated Marie de Mancini. It occurs in Madame de Motteville, and in Mademoiselle de Montpensier, and Marie repeats it in her own *mémoire, La Vérité dans son Jour.* The words she probably said were: " Vous pleurez, sire; vous êtes un roi, et pourtant vous souffrez que je parte! " The novel reader feels that what she should have said, taking the centre of the stage with a noble gesture of despair, are the ten words written for her by Dumas: " Sire, vous êtes un roi — vous pleurez — et je pars! "

What hour found Dumas with the *Mémoires* of Bussy-Rabutin in his hand, finding in the real man flesh and blood wherewith to clothe the puppets of Courtilz de Sandraz? Whether Dumas knew that the *Mémoires de M. d' Artagnan,* from which he frankly took his Musketeers, was a spurious document, and as much fiction as his own, will ever remain in doubt. He mentions the book in the same tone as Mr. Rider Haggard prints the sherd of Amenartas and the edifying inscription in Greek uncials, to prop the simple and probable story of *She.* Dumas uses the reference as a technical novelist's convention; and it is true that nine people out

of ten take it as such, and have not the faintest belief that such a *mémoire* ever existed. The curious fact is that it *did* exist. The *Mémoires* of *M. d'Artagnan*, by Gatien Courtilz de Sandraz et de Vergé, published in Amsterdam, in three volumes, about 1702, contain not only Dumas's main incidents, but the names of his chief characters — Athos, Porthos, Aramis, Tréville, Bernajoux, de Wardes, Milady, — and most of his narrative to boot. Also, it is the dullest book ever written, dry, juiceless, limp; quite as much of a contrast to the novel we love as *Hamblet* is to *Hamlet*.

There is an irony in the circumstance, however, that fate should so serve de Sandraz — himself a *trucqueur* of an earlier date — that his work should finally be ground up in the Maison A. Dumas et Compagnie. Yet Dumas may have believed the *Mémoires* were genuine. Saint-Simon believed it; and it does appear to be true that the real Captain d'Artagnan — amazed and innocent protagonist! — was killed before Maestricht in 1673. When the subject was first under discussion, Victor Hugo claimed to prefer Courtilz de Sandraz to Dumas; but he stands alone in this, and even he acknowledges that Dumas could have done little with the book but for other contemporary documents, such as Bussy, for instance.

For Bussy's *Mēmoires* is another work full of quotations; he is three muskeeters rolled into one, or, rather, perhaps, not unrolled into three. Intellect and vindic-

tiveness, those two main qualities of the man Bussy, were inconvenient to Dumas in constructing his heroes of romance. Those of us who know and love Madame de Sévigné have not forgotten that Bussy was her cousin; that he wrote her ardent love letters and received charmingly playful and reserved replies. Neither have they forgotten that when this honest wife repulsed him, her kinsman and playmate did not disdain the most spiteful and calumnious reprisals. Ungentlemanly conduct this, according to our standards; but even the good Corbinelli thought Madame de Sévigné virtuous to the point of affectation for spurning her attractive cousin. Well-born, handsome, rich till debt engulfed him, was Bussy; gallant soldier, humorist, and cynic; poor friend, worse enemy. But, through all his amazing verve, one feels the presence of intellect. He was important enough in learned circles to have his name Latinized into Bussius by the Rev. Edmund Calamy, that Mr. Collins of the theological world. Dr. Calamy speaks of the memoirs only by hearsay. Had he read them, one fears he might have denied our lively friend the dignity and solace of a Latin termination. Personally one loves and respects Dr. Calamy; but the thought of his reading Bussy's account of that journey with the Countess de Busset "en déshabillé fort galant" is enough to extinguish the most dignified in a gust of laughter.

Bussy had definite ideals. "Lorsque j'entrai dans le monde," he asserts, "ma première et ma plus forte in-

clination fut de devenir honnête homme, et de parvenir aux grands honneurs de la guerre." And he explains further, in a letter to Corbinelli: "L'honnête homme est un homme poli, et qui sait vivre." This definition of honesty is extremely modern; it satisfies many persons engaged in the financial operations of the present day. Bussy himself did not live up to it. His tongue was venomous, and on the altar of Democritus he sacrificed everything in life. He could never resist the temptation to be witty. His satire *L'Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules* landed him in prison; his epigrams stung on every side, hurting enemies and friends impartially, like a swarm of bees. He knew it was said of him "que j'étais l'homme du monde le plus médisant," and he knew it to be true.

The vitality, the humanity of the musketeers when compared with the *beaux ténébreux* of Scott, — with Ivanhoe or Nigel, — is far better understood when one considers the remarkable personal pictures which stood ready to the French novelist's hand. Could he possibly invent a character at once so gallant and so giddy as Bassompierre? In the marshal, and to a still greater extent in Bussy, the humorous hero stands clearly forth. The dash, the audacity, the courage and gayety, the high-handedness, the irresistible impertinences, are all here as in life. A thread of narrative, and it is done. At certain moments the very manner is Dumas'. During a journey Bussy stops overnight in a castle where there

was a ghost. "Moi, qui les crains, sans les croire," he says, "je me mettais la tête sous la couverture . . . pour m'ôter les moyens de rien entendre qui pût me faire peur." Here is Porthos-Bussy; while as for d'Artagnan-Bussy, there is the journey above mentioned, which Dr. Calamy has not read, unless such reading is permitted him in his present place of residence. It is indeed a jolly story, though too long and too *médisant* to quote here; but the echoes of its laughter ring down the scandalized years.

The huge laughter of the musketeers was caught from the pages of Messire Bussy. "Nous nous abandonnâmes aux éclats de rire; — nous eussions ri jusqu'aux larmes; — c'était un rire à deux mains," are not these all but the very Dumas phrases? But Bussy's humor held wit and observation besides the gift of laughter. It is hard to understand why Mr. Van Laun, in the *French Literature*, calls him a dull man and thinks his wit probably exaggerated.[1] The *Mémoires* display many undesirable qualities, but they are not dull. On occasion, the author can be d'Artagnan *tout pur*. "Je baisois quelquefois la comtesse devant la gouvernante, qui ne faisoit pas semblant de le voir, parce que je la baisois aussi, tant il est vrai," says Bussy-d'Artagnan slyly, "qu'il n'y'a qu'à intéresser les gens pour leur faire oublier leur devoir!"

One last citation. These are questions, says the outraged reader of romance, of picturesque character or

[1] H. Van Laun, "French Literature," II, p. 262.

suggestive environment; the accent of the creative artist is lacking in them. From what Dumas novel, excellent sir, comes the following? The hero says to Louis XIII, on the eve of a skirmish: —

" ' Sire, l'assemblée est prête, les violons sont entrés, et les masques sont à la porte. Quand il plaira à votre Majesté nous donnerons le ballet? '

" Il s'approcha de moi et me dit en colère: — ' Savez-vous que nous n'avons que cinq-cent livres de plomb dans le parc d'artillerie? ' Je lui dis: —

" ' Il est bien temps maintenant de penser à celà! Faut-il que pour un des masques qui n'est pas prêt, le ballet ne se danse pas? ' "

It occurs on page 192, volume II, of Bassompierre's *Mémoires*. Good reader, if you have already made the acquaintance of these fair ladies and gallant gentlemen, you will like me no less for loving them. But if not, wait no longer, I pray you, but send at once for Marguerite de Valois, for the intriguing de Retz, for Bassompierre, for Bussy, — above all, for Bussy, — to renew your acquaintance with the musketeers. If you are scrupulous on the score of morals, he will reassure you: "J'avais toujours eu un fonds de religion, et une dévotion particulière à la sainte Vierge." And he ends with a little philosophic quatrain: —

"Être satisfait de son sort,
Quel qu'il soit ne s'en jamais plaindre,
Et regarder venir la mort
Sans la désirer ni la craindre."

Plain to be seen then, is the influence of the personal record on Dumas and the novel of adventure, on the crime-and-detection story, and on the imprisonment-and-escape story. Later modern instances show that it has not lost its power. Mrs. Ward's *Lady Rose's Daughter* revived interest in her prototype, Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse; but the reader of Marmontel knew that it was not the letters alone which had inspired the novelist's creation. The few pages wherein Marmontel paints that central scene — central in the life of the real as of the fictitious Julie — stand out clear, graphic, obviously tempting to the strong and adequate hand. The incident is not one in which Marmontel himself figures, nor is the suggestion the result of a total personal impression, like Bussy or Bassompierre. It is contributed by the way, a gift, a friendly gift of the *mémoiriste*. Sometimes our friend's character is of value to us, sometimes his surroundings or his conversation. To the romancer there often is suggestion merely in the atmosphere of the past. Did Scott read Ousama ib'n Mounkidh, we wonder, that he draws so sympathetically, in *The Talisman*, the attitude of the Syrian emir toward the barbarous, crusading Frank? The effect of those great Italian eighteenth century autobiographers, Alfieri, Gozzi, Goldoni, Casanova, on the fiction and description dealing with their country, is almost too wide to be comprehended in one essay.

Lord Byron thought Goldoni's autobiography the

best in the world. Goethe enjoyed it — it is, indeed, a sort of Italian *Wilhelm Meister*. Carlo Goldoni typifies for us the Venetian of literature. "I was born in this racket,"[1] he says. "Could I help loving gayety?" Talkative, busy, industrious, and merry, he takes life with a smile and a shrug. He smiles always; indeed, he declares that he came into the world without crying. Like Wilhelm, he starts with a stock of illusions and in company with a troupe of wandering players; like Wilhelm, he parts with his illusions during his travels, but, unlike him, the readjustment is accomplished without any shock or bitterness. Vernon Lee calls him a "cheery, flighty little man," and thinks that "all his emotions and impressions have the levity, the good-natured simplicity of his work — the same light-hearted imperturbable slipperiness." To us, Goldoni seems more mercurial than slippery. Never a dissipated man, he takes certain vices for granted; his Latin romanticism in love goes hand in hand with a Latin canniness when it comes to marriage. On this subject the most "freddo Inglese" appears madly imprudent by comparison. A match is arranged for the youthful Carlo, but when he sees the lady he comments thus: —

"She was one of those delicate beauties whom the very air injures, and whom the smallest fatigue or pain discomposes." When he adds to this that her elder sister had become ugly after the birth of a child, he

[1] "Questo strepito."

considers it prudent to rupture the negotiations. In a second matrimonial arrangement the *dot* appears to be less than was first supposed, and so Goldoni leaves Venice in high dudgeon, his comedy in his pocket.

When he does marry, he finds his wife sensible and complaisant. "I shared my pleasures with her: she followed me everywhere. The only place she did not accompany me was to my mistress. She did not hinder me from going, but this actress was not to her taste, and there is no disputing taste." There is a pleasant *insouciance* about this. "I knew her docility; I owed her esteem and friendship." And, toward his later years, settled in Paris, he is serenely content in her company. We see him taking his well-earned ease, if not the lean, at least the slippered pantaloon. "I am of a pacific disposition," his last sentence declares; "I have always preserved my coolness of character: at my age I read little, and I read only amusing books." It is a peaceful, elderly philosophy. Yet Goldoni had his serious, his austere side. He had theories of art in advance of his day; he shows deep interest in science and in scientific discoveries. His fecundity, vivacity, and industry were amazing. In one year he wrote sixteen comedies. Of course, we think of Mr. Vincent Crummles and the washtubs, but let us not mistake. Goldoni wrote better Italian than the English of most of our one-comedy-a-year playwrights. Each one of

the sixteen comedies had a definite, if slender, plot and clearly delineated characters. There was no machinery necessary, he says, but to sit down with his scenario, and then merrily, copiously, the dialogue flowed on. It is all gay and busy and unvexed, like his life. One is glad he died just as the French Revolution came to cloud that golden sunset. The far gleam from these pages shines athwart many novels which have tried to catch and hold its radiance. To work, to laugh, to live always next the earth and in sunny weather, seems his prerogative. We have read such lives, "in earlier Sicilian," but this is almost the last.

If Goldoni is of the country, Gozzi is of the town. Goldoni tramps from village to village, sharing his last half-bottle with the soubrette. Count Gozzi, "a tall, gaunt man in his old-fashioned clothes," as Vernon Lee describes him, remains in Venice, immersed in legal affairs and in the theatre, where he was Goldoni's rival. His book is exceedingly rare in the original, so rare that J. Addington Symonds, the translator, says he had to hunt for four months to procure a single copy. Gozzi himself termed them *Useless memoirs, published from humility,* yet he must have realized that they were a useful and interesting commentary on Venetian life.

The author is a poor gentleman, the *comte* of a decaying house. His shrewdness and energy could accomplish nothing in a family where there was no money, and

eleven idle children. The financial difficulties of the Gozzis, their quarrels, their lawsuits, would delight Balzac. Our author is caustically frank in describing his relatives, and he had personally a certain business acumen. But literature was his passion; here, and here only, he displays enthusiasm. On the subject of his own performances he is fond of telling us how he never accepted payment; and rather maintains the attitude that "he handles his pen with the negligent ease of a man of quality." Gozzi is not simple and direct like his countryman, Goldoni; he is cool, aloof, ironical, modern. Vernon Lee's further picture of him, "always silent, self-absorbed — kindly idle, half-crazy, a poet and a humorist, an aristocrat and a dreamer" — hardly tallies with his description of himself as a brisk and competent man of the world. He may have been a dreamer, but he was not romantic. Women hardly came into his life. "I regarded the sex with the eyes of a philosopher," and "matrimony was wholly alien to my views of liberty," he asserts. But he loved the life of the place, of the *coulisse* and the café, the intrigue, — its success or failure, — the little supper, the little satire, the idle crowd that applauded or hissed, the life of buzzing engagements, like banging doors, — of small things in a miniature metropolis.

Gozzi's humor is a thing apart; it is so cynical and irreverent, it is almost American. After a quarrel with his mother, he left her presence with "hilarity" and, taking

his younger brother, quits home forever, quoting "E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle!" What he calls "my habitual philosophy of laughter" never fails him. It stands his friend in bitter disputes, in unfriendly desertions; it colors his feelings, even when they seem to be most warmly aroused. These two men, Goldoni and Gozzi, supplementing one another, bring before us vividly that decaying, pre-monarchical Italy, and in so doing they assume the parentage of the Italy of fiction. Without them, its hundred private aspects must have remained unknown. In the details, in the small, clear, sunny glimpses, the comedians lunching in that slow canal boat on the Brenta, which Goldoni called a Noah's ark; Gozzi in the dressing-room of the Ricci, or hurrying in his gondola to the play, sword in hand, — there is the novel in embryo. History cannot do this; it is the place and privilege of such books as these. But, like history, here are canvases so broad that the question is more of a whole communicated feeling for a special place and epoch, than of any one particular incident. Mrs. Wharton's *Valley of Decision* has caught the mood, has been pieced together, as it were, out of bits of foreground; the effect, however careful, has been, as the Italians would themselves put it, *troppo studiato*. It is an example, however, ready at hand to show that fascination is still potent.

As a final token of how slight a suggestion may serve the creative impulse, providing the accent is high, one

may re-read Erasmus's autobiographical letter concerning the tragedy of his parents. It is brief, bald, poignantly intense; and the quiver of that intensity has remained with Charles Reade through the many and chaotic pages of *The Cloister and the Hearth.*

# CHAPTER X

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL GROUP

In the two foregoing sections we have dealt with the personal narrative from the point of view of its individual appeal to the mind or dramatic sense of the novelist. Inevitably, documents of this kind must have a peculiar value for him, since they permit him to enlarge both his extensive and intensive experience. In life, this has ever been a temptation to the creative nature, which forgets it is a contradiction in terms and foredoomed to failure. No one can forget that picture of Lucien de Rubempré at the door of the greenroom, urging himself forward on the first frivolous steps by the thought "un homme qui veut tout peindre, doit tout connaître." And yet never was the falsity of this idea better shown than in the case of Lucien's creator himself; for the contrast between the amazing diversity of Balzac's canvas, and the narrow and relatively austere course of his daily life, remains the enigma for his critics. Indeed, the novelist in his proper person finds himself face to face with the fact that emotion cannot with most of us be at once deep and wide, that one is apt to pay for extensive experience by loss of intensive experience, and that, therefore, he must come the most to rely upon his observation and imagination. Armed

with these tools, he freely turns to use the written records of the experiences of others. Gauged by the autobiographical intention, they are placed in a proper perspective for the reader; so their full suggestiveness is retained while their trustworthiness is increased. The novelist finds his store enriched, not merely in respect of incident and atmosphere, but by the interplay of character upon character, and by a closer view of those illuminating inconsistencies which display the richness and complexity of human nature. Moreover, there is borne in upon the open-minded reader of these documents a sense of the seriousness and importance of them as pieces of life; he begins to see that, however immense the diversity of individuality, it is weighted and underlaid, like everything else in nature, with certain principles of law. He is able to observe some of those principles in operation, to gain a perspective which he could never obtain from actual experience. He begins to realize why his honest, strenuous efforts have produced but cheap and one-sided effects, beside the unconscious and effortless play of genius over the subject. He sees why these intelligences of the past, with their large reading, their wide, imaginative horizons, and their comparatively narrow, personal experience, accomplished such infinitely greater things than Mr. Jones, who conscientiously toured Labrador and boiled his moccasins for his new book; or Mr. Smith, who spent three years studying in the slums for his.

The acquaintance of Samuel Richardson with females of the class of Mrs. Jukes was, quite probably, *nil;* yet there she is; and where, in Heaven's name, is the procuress, studied with microscope or kodak, of the ardent and reformative Smith? The would-be novelist, therefore, realizing that his first effort must be to understand the laws of, and to obtain data upon, human nature, realizes also that this is hugely more difficult, if not impossible, when he walks on the same level with his subject, — he cannot see the wood for the trees. He must, therefore, do as the great have done, raise himself above the level of swarming thousands, and apply himself to the study of generalities, and to the observation of highly-colored and quintessential types. Does he desire, for instance, to understand the working of poverty on the youthful spirit? It is painted for him by Anthony Trollope, by Thomas Platter. Is his theme the arrogance of the aristocrat? He turns to the pages of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, of Bassompierre, of Marguerite de Valois. Does he intend to depict "the delights and killing agonies" of the artist struggling onward? He reads the self-portrayals of Cellini, Haydon, Giovanni Dupré. Every shade of religious feeling and influence, from the thirteenth century *naïvetés* of Salimbene to the refined, intellectual austerities of a Mill or a Martineau, has in these documents been made the subject of analysis and portrayal. Hate, envy, affection, and devotion, the abnormal nature

bent and twisted, the normal nature healthily blossoming to fruition, — all such experiences furnish reliable material on which the creative intelligence may work.

But the personal record has an effect on literature far wider than can be conveyed by describing detached individual cases, and the novel or novels which they may have inspired. As nuclei of certain past social energies, regarded not individually but in groups, they show the prevailing tones and predominating influences of their time. Once more, as in the question of sincerity, it is not the special instance which should be considered, but the weight of aggregate instances. One statement here, one impression there, means nothing; but the body of likeness or unlikeness contained in a contemporaneous group of autobiographies must show the main tendencies of the society by which the group was surrounded. Pages have been and are each day being written — pages of inquiry and speculation — as to the rise of literary and social movements, and as to the presence or absence of certain mental and moral conditions in the society of the past; as to when, where, how, the great determining forces began to work the changes of the world. Passing reference is made, perchance, to letter or journal or *mémoire*; not yet has there been undertaken any such simple and concrete expedient as the comparative examination of contemporary memoir groups, and of their testimony, conscious or unconscious, on the subject in hand. Far too wide is such

examination for the confines of this essay. It is a study so fruitful that it might well fill a separate volume. But we may profitably linger over two of its main aspects here, because they bear directly on certain individual cases later to be considered.

It is obvious that the study of a group of individuals will provide correctives for the study of any one among those individuals. Each human being rotates upon his own axis, if we wish to put it so, — rises and sets large upon the horizon, exercises his attraction, in greater or less degree, upon the other bodies which come within his influence. Change the point of view, and he becomes an infinitesimal unit in a vast aggregate of units, sharing the main characteristics of the aggregate, and with personal idiosyncrasies which seem but microscopical. The metaphor is not here intended to minimize the importance of the individual. The sun will always remain to us the most important of solar bodies, however often we strive to realize its relation to a universe inconceivably vast. But it is also true that we increase our knowledge of the sun when we study it as one in a group of flaming stars.

An autobiography is apt to contain much material which standing by itself would seem to show the writer abnormal; an impression which may be changed or dispelled by comparison with another case of the same contemporary group. Such over-emphasized impressions may persist through several generations, for the want of

some simple expedient like this comparison. For instance, when we read of them singly, the superstitions of Cellini, the artist, and of Cardan, the mathematician, strike us as bearing a most disproportionate relation to their other qualities. At the age of three, Cellini sees a salamander; later he raises the devil in person in the Coliseum. The visions, the omens, the supernatural experiences of Cardan, require a chapter to themselves. But the impression of individual abnormality vanishes when we compare the two as contemporaries; when we realize that the existence of a similar degree of credulity in men so representative and so different, means, simply, its prevalence in their society to a degree which has not previously been understood. The most hasty purview of the main autobiographical groups shows their participation in certain common attitudes, views, and feelings, which must be realized before we can separate those attitudes, views, and feelings peculiar to the individual himself. The whole impression must be obtained, if only to serve as a background for the more salient and picturesque figures of a group. In studying such groups, one follows the lines laid down by the psychologists concerning all crowds. Gustave Le Bon, in his *Psychologie des Foules*, reminds us that a number of individuals does not constitute a crowd — in the psychological sense — until the different individualities which compose it are for the time being submerged by the pressure of a common energy, a

common emotion, and a common end. The two additional causes operating to produce this submergence are contagion and a mutual sense of power. The crowd, therefore, partakes of a single general character, very different from that produced by its separate units, and "its sentiments and thoughts turn collectively in the same direction." When carefully observed, this fact, which Le Bon terms "the psychological law of the mental unity of crowds," will be found equally true of the autobiographical group, and explanatory of certain apparently contradictory elements in the individual documents forming that group. These elements, which are really so simple, have often puzzled the critic; but a comprehension of them is doubly necessary when one comes to consider their total impression, the atmosphere of the group in question.

"Telle groupe humaine," says M. Ribot,[1] "laisse celui qui le fréquente une impression de tristesse, de gaieté, de dissipation, d'austérité, d'immoralité, etc. Cette atmosphère morale qui joue un si grand rôle dans l'éducation et la vie sociale est une résultante du sentiment évoqué." The reader of a series of contemporary memoirs, then, stands for the person who frequents the group, and who is thus able to gauge the quantity and quality of the impression — the "résultante du sentiment évoqué." One is also able to measure its extent, and to compare the effect of certain permeating moral

[1] "Psychologie des Sentiments."

atmospheres on certain societies, with the effect of other moral atmospheres during other eras. M. Quetelet thinks that these similarities extend themselves even to physiognomy, forming definite and recognizable types, such as the fifteenth century Italian facial type, and the typical Napoleonic "soldat de la vieille garde."

M. Taine goes even further, for, in the introduction to his *History of English Literature*, he states that a study of the law of group-formation is indispensable to the understanding of all questions of psychological and æsthetical development. "History," he thinks, "must search nowadays for these rules of human growth; with the special psychology of each special formation it must occupy itself . . . . "

"I would give fifty volumes of charters, and one hundred volumes of state papers, for the memoirs of Cellini, the epistles of Paul, the Table Talk of Luther, . . . " cries the enthusiastic M. Taine, who believes also that "the confessions of a superior man are more instructive than a heap of historians."

However this may be, — for perceptions of values differ, — it is a comparatively simple matter to bring this group study within the scope of a reader's attention. Nor must the group in this particular case be limited only to subjective documents, although these will ever remain the richest nuggets of the cache. In displaying general characteristics, however, the bald historical record, or the political diary has its place. The lists

placed in Appendix B do not claim to cover every case, but yet give the representative members of each group. Chronicles and historical records are inserted only when written in the first person.

With these before one, it becomes no difficult task to run rapidly over the distinguishing and salient qualities of these groups as there tabulated, before passing on to examine the cases in particular.

The first thing to be determined of any individual *mémoire*, after its sincerity has been tested, is its relation to its group. How many of its qualities are common to that society, how many belong to the individual? Cardan's superstition is shared by Cellini, Cornaro, etc.; his intellectual penetration and scientific spirit belong to him alone. The attitude toward nature of the Electress Sophia is shared by the other representative self-biographers who wrote during the same fifty years; her humor, her independence of mind, are wholly her own. Compare her in this regard with the two Mancini, or la Grande Mademoiselle, or Madame Guyon, and the difference will be felt at once. Such intellectual independence as she displays is totally unknown, has not been dreamed of by these other ladies. The poor scholar, Thomas Platter, is a figure at once strikingly individual and strongly related to the learned world of his day. What he owes to Conrad Pellican, to the Scaligers, to Casaubon, is shown, and also the toiling man himself. Here, then, lies the chief value of the

figure evoked, namely, its likeness and its unlikeness to other figures still, for us, lurking in the dusk.

It is amazing to find how fresh an impression may be received from these societies; how well one may come to know the separate members, to understand their friendships, enmities, jealousies, emulations. Across the page flashes a shifting movement and color like life. And although the greater figures will always tend to obscure the lesser, yet many of us will find friends among these.

Who can forget l'abbé Morellet, "ce bon Morellet," with his passion for discussion, his gay wit, his mordant irony, his religious feeling surviving the shock of many revolutions? Charles Collé, that French Pepys, thinks him a hot-headed fellow, yet ever apt and wise. Morellet had, in truth, great critical power and a catholic taste. His knowledge of English had broadened his mind. His paragraph of criticism on *Clarissa Harlowe:* "Clarisse, cette grande machine, dans laquelle tant de ressorts sont employés à produire un seul et grand effet, où tant de caractères sont dessinés avec tant de force, où tout est préparé avec tant d'art, où tout se lie et se tient," has not been bettered by all our English eulogies. But he was chiefly noted for his passionate love of conversation, which in truth he carried to an excess. Morellet notes that the Revolution in breaking up society, scattering his friends, and reducing him to hack-work in a garret, did him the greatest wrong of all

when it deprived him of good talk. This love of discussion shows in all the members of that brilliant and turbulent circle. Duclos, Saint-Lambert, Francœuil, Mademoiselle Quinault, and the rest, appear to exist chiefly for purposes of conversation. In the curious, partly fictitious, and yet very real *Mémoires* of Madame d'Épinay, we may distrust the sentiment, look askance at the ethics, and smile at the philosophy, but we believe in the conversations. Within all that mass of artificial insincerity and insipid sentiment, one thing stands forth real and living, — that talk *chez* Mademoiselle Quinault where Duclos bangs the table in his energy, and the little Émilie fears that the tone is becoming *un peu fort*. During these discussions, lasting often uninterruptedly for hours, — for, in comparison with our own, those were leisurely times, — men's opinions were shifted and crystallized, their ideas formed and defined. In those days there was a chance to develop original thought on politics or literature, which we now buy for a penny in the newspapers. Then it took the hard hammer of discussion to mould the great changes that were pending. "Talk, talk," says Turgenev bitterly; "smoke, smoke!" Yet this was the smoking of a fire whose flames were to redden the skies of the world.

Madame d'Épinay furnishes future generations, all unconsciously, with some very interesting matter when she introduces them to her lover, M. Dupin de Fran-

cœuil. The future grandfather of George Sand, this gentleman displays certain characteristics which we recognize. Nowhere in all literature is there given a more vivid and convincing description of the process of corrupting the mind. The young Madame d'Épinay falls into the hands of a certain Mademoiselle d'Ette (a figure out of Balzac), who, with her lover, the Chevalier de Valory, sets to work systematically to bring Émilie down to the level of the people around her. The success of her arguments is naïvely shown. Whatever is false and fictitious in the book, — and there is much, — it is not the psychology. If it had not been a doctored autobiography, it might have lived as an important novel. Of course, Jean Jacques, the central figure of that society, has plainly impressed his method on these *mémoires*. That opening chapter of analysis and explanation, so strong in intellectual vigor, so weak in philosophy, is typical of his influence. It is even more noteworthy in the case of a later member of the group, in Madame Roland. This remarkable woman, of indomitable spirit, fine sense of proportion, moral strength, and delicate perceptions, thought to imitate the *Confessions* and to avow certain dusky and morbid moods which would never have had the definition of words attached to them but for Rousseau's example. She has done herself a lasting injustice by their perpetuation; but the incident is very instructive as showing us the power of imitation in forming the

tone of a group. No healthier woman ever lived than Jeanne Phlipon. This weak morbidity, which she caught from one of the most morbid of men, is set at naught and contradicted by her every other word. Cases like these permit us more successfully to understand the individual autobiographer's relation to his protagonist.

To return to the group itself once more, and to broaden the view still further, Le Bon has sufficiently demonstrated that all persons writing their own lives during the same decade or half-century would not necessarily fall into the same group. Wholly different groups may exist during the same era. We see this in England, where the Quaker journalists form a separate and distinct cluster, unconnected with the secular personal records of the time. Sporadic cases of self-study occur wholly outside of any contemporary influences. Where people have met and known one another, or observed and imitated one another, or have merely fallen under similar prevailing influences, we are warranted in grouping them together. Where contemporary self-biographies display the same methods of presentation, the same subjective viewpoint, similar sides of frankness, similar corners of reticence, we are warranted in grouping them together. Cardan, Cellini, Cornaro, with Tartaglia, Vesalius, and other fragmentary cases — the first important Italian group — may never all have met in the flesh, but a family likeness in method and hand-

ling cannot escape the most obtuse. If the grouping strikes one reader as forced, another will at once acknowledge that it brings the heterogeneous material into order and renders it amenable to law.

In the same way, only by grouping will the reader be aided in forming the relation of the subjective document to the whole world of personal narrative. Observation of the lists,[1] and of the proportion borne to the whole by the cases marked as subjective, will render certain facts immediately apparent. That the subjective tendency rises during certain social and mental conditions, falls during others, is the first of these. This process is the same whatever the nation, although more typically operative in France, that richest of all literatures in the personal record. If one were to draw a line through the centuries as a measurement of this tendency, it will be found to start very low before the reign of Henri IV, with but two subjective cases in eighteen personal chronicles. During the next half-century the rise is steady: we find six cases definitely subjective out of twenty-six *mémoires*, and some of these last show, in part, traces of the influence, although they do not maintain it. The reign of Louis XIV doubles the number of autobiographies, and the subjective cases take a jump; fifteen out of forty-four are fully so, and at least half of the residue have partly personal qualities. Just before the Revolution the highest point is

[1] Placed in Appendix B.

reached by the Rousseau group; thirteen out of a total of twenty-one *mémoires* are complete self-presentations.

The Revolution and the Napoleonic era produced an enormous lessening in the subjective cases, whereas the personal narrative itself increased in numbers. Taking the space of fifty years, which for all practical purposes cover the main events, we find twenty-five important and representative personal accounts of the Revolution, only two of which deal with the writer himself rather than with his experiences. The immense outpouring of Napoleonic *mémoires* shows only five self-studies in the total of sixty personal narratives. After the Napoleonic epoch, we enter upon modern literature, with its misleading facility to all sorts of print. The cases cease to group themselves with any definiteness; they become heterogeneous and scattered. But the passion for "*l'analyse personnelle*" rises once more, and out of thirty-two of the more interesting later French *mémoires*, half or more are by self-students.

The Italian autobiographies are so much fewer than the French that the course of our line of proportion is sharply accented. It starts higher in the scale, for the personal and family record was an established fashion in Italian literature as early as 1300. The forerunners whose names head the list in Appendix B (Italian) all show in their histories that they follow a known custom. But the earliest noteworthy Italian self-biographies are also the most subjective cases on record.

Between 1500 and 1575 eight out of eleven are minutely self-analytical. The proportion declines during the next one hundred and fifty years — the time of artificial and imitative prose in Italy — but rises again to the highest point at the end of the eighteenth century. A group of master examples then occurs. The struggle for Italian independence fifty years later, produces the usual large number of narratives in the first person, and again, as in France, the event obscures the writer. Only five out of twenty-five are self-examinations in any sense of the word.

English literature shows cases of this kind no earlier than 1600. We find twenty important secular autobiographies written before 1700; of these, six are personal. The religious Quaker journalists from 1624 to 1800 form a definite and singularly interesting separate group, maintaining a high average of introspection. The Napoleonic wars caused the fashion to drop. It is succeeded rather by the literary, anecdotal memoir, descriptive of the friendships and activities of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The scientific group, about 1850, produced an outburst of self-study which is the equal in value and proportion of the Italian groups; but since that time, as likewise in France, the movement has lost coherence and clearness, clogged by the innumerable cheap and petty cases which flood the public. The imaginary line just mentioned expresses better than any further description the ratio of subjective to

objective cases, at different epochs, under different influences. And comparison develops still more; it shows *that the conditions under which the subjective tendency rises or falls are similar conditions.*

Thus there is made manifest the presence of a general law. A simple induction will enable the reader to form and to complete the law of these cases for himself. *The subjective autobiography groups itself about the great intellectual movements and changes of the world, and lessens or disappears in times of material change.* What occurred during the points where the imaginary line touches its highest mark? In France its height is reached just before the Revolution, that time of enormous intellectual activity and change of ideas. This intellectual uprising produces Rousseau and his group; when action followed, the self-study disappeared. In Napoleon's day it is hard to find a single subjective document, so completely has that central figure overshadowed men's minds, so fully has imagination been dominated by the event. In Italy the same law is manifest. An earlier civilization, an earlier intellectual movement, earlier starts the subjective trend; it rises high just before 1600, at the time of Galileo and Cardan, at the era of new thought. After dropping lower during the hundred and fifty years of Italian feuds, and internecine quarrels, it rises once more in Alfieri's day, when Vernon Lee notes a wave of intellectual energy running through Italy, under the same current of

change which produced the French Revolution. During the period of struggle for united Italy, it dropped to the lowest mark in its history. In England, several great movements are intermingled; but its political activities keep the percentage extremely low until much later than in other countries. The violent fluctuations just after the Restoration, followed by the Quaker and other religious movements, mark a first high point; and the second high point is not reached until our own day, when the great scientific upheaval shifted the whole intellectual point of view.

Just as the iron filings rise and cluster about a magnet, so do men's individualities rise to expression under the influence of a current of thought. The impulse is not to be explained by the general theory that warlike periods of national life are apt to be followed by an outburst of literary and creative energy. The English and Italian tables both give examples of the rise in the self-study at a time of general literary stagnation, preceding marked intellectual changes. The English scientific group begins at the very ebb of the greater literary activities of the nineteenth century.

Find the dawn of new ideas, find the moment when men's minds begin to submit to the shaking power of an intellectual change, and there you will find the attempt at self-understanding expressed in a group of personal records. The observation of great movements at work in himself causes a man fresh interest in himself: the

observation of a similar movement at work in others makes a man wish to state his position, to define his *credo*. The atmosphere of doubt, restlessness, insecurity, caused by intellectual upheavals, produces in the serious mind a desire to clear the ground for himself, and to aid others, — produces, in a word, the autobiographical intention. And so we find these cases following the law, and grouping themselves about movements of intellectual significance.

# PART II

# CHAPTER XI

## NATIONALITY AND PROFESSION

Long ere we have reached this present point in our examination, certain definite, general questions will have been asked by the reader. Discussion of the autobiographer as a class and as an individual, raises the question as to the main influences at work on the individual and on the class. In other words, the reader has come to enquire what effect a national and professional bias may have had on this particular literary manifestation. Is the autobiographical intention a literary intention merely, or does it strike deeper root? Must we not, before particularizing the examples, comment on the broader aspect of race, nation and occupation? For instance, we are asked: "Are the best self-studies written by men whose work is literature, or by those whose work is not literature?" and "What nationality has, as a whole, produced the best work of this kind?"

Our ramble is here not upon a by-path at all, or, rather, it is as if the path, heretofore leading by flowering thicket, shady wood, or daisied meadow, came suddenly out upon the broad and ancient highway of some vanished people, overgrown and disused, but still bear-

ing tokens of its greatness in the huge and crumbling stones of the roadbed, and the easy rise of its grade over the hill. These main roads still traverse our mental history, though time and confusing civilization have obscured their outlines. Does the power of, and the wish for, self-delineation belong to the literary gift, or is it something entirely apart?

One could wish to glance at a table here, just as it is pleasanter to climb a height and take a hasty survey of the surrounding country, before plodding through it on foot. But the matter is too broad for tabulation, — can hardly be presented in any convincing tabular form. Perhaps this, in itself, is an answer to the question, for we find the self-biography written by the religious and the secular alike, by the doctor, the lawyer, the artist, the actor, the poet, the novelist, the scientist, the philosopher, the rogue, the soldier, the statesman, and the monarch. If a large number are the work of the *littérateur* (this French word covers what English needs a phrase to express), an equally large number are by persons unused to the pen, and driven to the task by the autobiographical intention alone. If a proportion of narrators might exclaim with Count Fosco: "Habits of literary composition are perfectly familiar to me," there is an equal proportion to whom the whole question of form, arrangement, and style is acknowledged and shown to be a matter of painful effort.

One fact, however, may be noted as most suggestive. Out of the two hundred and seventy or more examples [1] which have been deemed worthy of careful study, barely thirty-four have been the work of the imaginative writer. The poet has contributed eighteen and the novelist nine, the playwrights seven autobiographies, as against twenty-six by general literary workers, thirty-three by philosophers and scientists, nine by historians and thirteen by statesmen; the balance is made up by smaller numbers of other professions. There is, in other words, strong evidence that the self-study makes its special appeal to the exact mind, and that in modern times it is exceedingly rare to find a scientific worker who has *not* left some measure of autobiographical material. The ratio confirms that established by the table on reasons for writing, where the predominating reason was found to be a desire to add to the search for truth. In fact, when we place in one column the cases just given, with the forty main examples of religious confession actuated by the same serious reason, the aggregate number (one hundred and fifty-five) is more than half the number of capital personal records.

Surely, if further evidence were needed as to the serious and honest purpose of the autobiography, it is given by showing how much more its form has appealed in the past to men of fact than to men of fancy; with what high and holy things it has been associated. The great autobiography may be the work of men so unlike

[1] In Appendix C.

as Cellini, Franklin, Alfieri, but a likeness exists, notwithstanding — it is the common seriousness of conception acting on a high quality of mental power.

So far as interest and value go, occupation and profession appear to have slight influence. Valuable cases occur under every one of the tabulated professions. The soldier, the court-lady, — Monluc, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, — may give us a noteworthy self-biography; and so may Thomas Platter, the obscure schoolmaster; Solomon Maimon, the Jewish teacher; Al-Ghazzali, the súfi. The important personal narratives are not, necessarily, by professional writers; nor can they suffer the reproach — if reproach it be — that they are oftenest the work of imaginative minds. On the contrary, the majority of these subjective records are composed by specialists, scientists, or religious leaders. Historical and political memoirs, it goes without saying, are an expression of monarchs, statesmen, and court functionaries, and descriptive of their peculiar situations. Where a man's position in life brings him nearer to those events which in their very nature affect and interest millions of his fellow-men, he is likely to take advantage of the fact, and so a *mémoire* becomes a sort of convention. In any case, we are warranted in classing our self-study with other scientific material — a dignity denied it hitherto. If we expect any commentary on the effects of profession or occupation we shall be disappointed; nothing definite may be gathered

from the page. Certain generalizations may, unquestionably, be made if certain moods are felt. A common hyper-sensitiveness runs through such poet-lives as have been left to us; the accuracy in bulk and in detail of the scientist is, of course, shown in writing his own life; of the painter, the doctor, the actor, our records are violently diverse — no one thread runs through them. This is most curious in the last case, for of various memoirs of stage folk, one (Macready) is a religious document; two (Ristori and Salvini) show natures and methods simple, dignified, direct, and sincere; three (Clairon, Charke, and Bauer) are beset with vanity and morbid grievances; "Perdita" is wholly romantic, and Madame Bernhardt wholly objective. To no one effect can we point as the result of their profession on these eight persons. On the other hand, few autobiographies of the military order appear to have been written which do not mention a love and a talent for mathematics in boyhood. In this one regard, from the French marshals to the English Lord Wolseley, they are similarly endowed, almost from infancy. But, as a whole, we may confidently repeat that the influence of profession on individuality is imperceptible.

The question of race-characteristics, of nationality, is one which we must not be led to over-emphasize. The statistician has pointed out that evidence can have little weight on this subject since it must be limited to a few individual minds. Quantity, rather than qual-

ity, counts here. Allusion has already been made to Quetelet's warning that a study of the individual hampers the proper conception of general laws; and that the individual must be regarded as only a fraction of the species. If this warning was advisable at the outset of a general study, it becomes necessary where the study touches on questions of race.

Yet, if no man is a complete guide to the race from which he springs, it is true that his own personality may underline, may accent, those characteristics which we speak of as Oriental or Anglo-Saxon — as French, or English, or Italian. In every highly-colored temperament there are shades belonging to a man's race rather than to himself. The Germanness of Goethe, the Italianness of Alfieri, are plain to be seen, although their genius may be universal. But, as a pyramid may not stand upon its apex, just so one must not rely too confidently upon the race qualities of a single personality, however concentrated an essence of his race that personality may appear. A warning is needful, because the mere terms of writing tend to exaggerate the subject, tend to make the reader believe an argument is being stated and conclusions formed. Therefore it must be made very clear at the outset that certain curiosities of psychology are handled for what they are worth.

A single speck of cochineal or pepper may be too small, when isolated, for us accurately to determine the color of the substance, which yet it shares. If it be

presumptuous to volunteer any final estimate of the French intellect after a study of the *mémoiriste* alone, yet the *mémoiriste* must contribute his share to our impressions of the whole. Briefly then, theorists may be equally mistaken if they "have been cowardly and hung back" and if they "have been temerarious and rushed unwisely in," as Stevenson puts it. One should not exaggerate the suggestiveness of any one literary class; yet only the obtuse would deny that class its full participation in all the characteristics of its race.

Since we know that there have been many fluctuations in the introspective tendency, and that the approach to a measure of perfection in self-delineation has been far from steady or continuous, it were not amiss to recapitulate our canons for the classic, the ideal autobiography. The first is a serious autobiographical intention, seriously maintained and seriously fulfilled. The work thus weighted must possess that balance between fact and feeling without which no attributes of character can be placed in a proper perspective to the observer. The sense of proportion in both feeling and fact must be delicate and just. There should be style enough to make the personality count. More is usually a disadvantage, and any involved, euphuistic tendency injures the book at the outset. The writer of his own life must remember above all, that he is making first, a scientific document; second, a piece of literature. If he can do it simply, clearly, vividly, so much the better

for him and for us; but he had better make a dry digest than a romantic narrative; better follow Cardan than Kenelm Digby.

The standards just set up have been fulfilled to a larger degree by the Italians than by any other nation. Not only do their incomparably great examples reach more nearly our perfect self-study than those of any other country, but their unfinished, their minor cases, share in their distinction. We owe them Alfieri, Goldoni, Querini, Cardan, and Cellini; complete, authoritative psychological records; and also marvelously perfect fragments — Lorenzino de Medici, Vico, Chiabrera, Leopardi, Petrarch, Giusti. These show an equal clearness, balance, and just discrimination of values. They never err in over-emphasizing the non-essentials. This pre-eminence of Italian memoirs has given rise to admirable editions and collections, to penetrating commentators like Ancona and Luigi Carrer. The crowning glory of the Italian autobiographer, however, is his ability to distinguish between emotion, sentiment, and fact. Never is the reader in the slightest doubt as to what Benvenuto Cellini was *doing*, as apart from what he was *feeling*. The fear, affection, and superstition of Cardan are carefully differentiated from his acts, from his accomplishment, from his opinions. In Alfieri's struggle for self-control there is no confusion between what actually happened, what other people thought, and what Alfieri thought. This extraordinary combination of high capacity and

emotion with a scientific method, is not to be found in other literatures to anything like the same degree. There are separate instances, of course. Herbert Spencer represents the scientific method in autobiography, but in his case the method has overwhelmed the matter and left but little construction to the picture. On the other hand, the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, and the *Histoire de ma Vie*, so lack method, are so occupied with the flow of feeling, and the vague and rosy glow of reminiscence, that, whereas we cannot somehow see Mr. Spencer going daily to the Athenæum Club, and feel, instead, that his real place of residence was in a glass case at the British Museum, we are equally at a loss to evoke the young Wolfgang or the later Aurore Dudevant, and cannot shake off the sensation that we have been reading rather inferior works of fiction by these noted hands. Now this is not once the case with the Italian writers, in whom the power of just analysis does not seem to interfere with the presentation of a living figure. Apparently, emotion in literary expression has retained with them its primal force, has not become weakened, diluted, into sentiment. It is as if their creative faculty has paused longer than is usual at the point of balanced maturity, when emotion still gives impetus to the intellectual forces, when intellect gives direction and weight to emotion. The Italian autobiography has displayed this measure of equilibrium for a space of three hundred years or more, — dis-

plays it still, in sporadic and scattered cases. Pages of Giusti forcibly recall that stream of earlier power from 1575 to 1800.

In no other country, among no other people, has the self-biographer shown an impersonal aloofness in regard to truth with the same touch, as we may say, in which he has animated his picture with the warm hues of life. Let any one lay side by side those passages in which Jerome Cardan deals with his gambling, Benvenuto Cellini with his amours, and similar passages from Jean Jacques Rousseau; or compare Alfieri's description of his conquest over passion and entrance into freedom of mind, with Franklin's *errata*, and somewhat smug progress on the road to prosperity, and the differences will be at once as striking as apparent.

Far exceeding the Italian in number and variety, yet, on the whole, below their level of general excellence, the French *mémoire* has stood for centuries as an expression of the most characteristic qualities of the French genius. From the first it has been a literary creation rather than a scientific document. The very earliest cases are marked by their sense for style, their love of form, the unity and finish of their construction. A literary impulse produced them, a literary atmosphere pervades the completed work. Sentiment as a literary constituent is, therefore, disproportionately predominant. Passion, emotion — not literary things at all — are banished.

But if it be true that several Italian autobiographers reach levels to which only a single famous French self-student has attained, yet no one can deny to the French hand a mastery in rendering this kind of narrative artistic, agreeable, and complete. If there be in France no such group of great psychological cases as we have found in Italy, there is a mass of admirably interesting works. At once lively and accurate, polished without stiffness, flexible without looseness, the French *mémoire* carries with it a general readableness, independent of era, of author, — we had almost said, of matter. It is this general readableness and popularity and fascination which has led to the wholesale forgery of *mémoires*, in full operation, as we have seen, as far back as the time of Courtilz de Sandraz and the *Mémoires d'Artagnan*. The traits which coalesce to make this universal readableness, include wit and humor (for in other literatures the early autobiography is wholly serious), graceful details superimposed upon a plan of regularity, and an infinite penetration and vivacity in dealing with persons. It is in France that woman makes her first appearance as a *mémoiriste* — woman, so especially fitted by her continuity of memory to preserve for future generations both the main aspect of the social life of her day, and the rich details which build up the life of the individual.

If we place the French and Italian records beside one another, we see the lines of human nature in the latter

deeper-cut, more freely outlined; a rough vigor, a primal force, lives in them. The capacity for creative emotion, heightened and strong in the Italian, has in the French been formalized and lowered to a cult of sentiment. This is the main great difference between them. Another difference is developed when one looks at the chief tendencies of the French literary mind, and notes the sense for form above mentioned, and also the inherent and overwhelming sense for personality. This interest has by no means escaped the psychologist. M. Alfred Fouillée, in his most illuminating tract on the *Psychologie du peuple Français*, analyzes it in the following terms: —

"Par son intellectualisme, notre littérature est portée à considérer les êtres et les personnes sous l'aspect qui les rend plus saisissables à l'intelligence; or, on peut dire que c'est avant tout l'aspect conscient, celui où l'être existe pour soi, et devenu transparent à lui-même, le devient aussi aux autres. Ce que nos écrivains mettent à relief, ce sout toutes les passions et les idées qui arrivent à la connaissance de soi."

This intellectuality, so early turned upon itself, is present in the most trivial example, entirely blotting out surroundings, nature, conditions, beauty, or atmosphere. Nature hardly exists for the Frenchman before the Revolution, and M. Fouillée does not let this fact escape him.

"Le sens de la nature," he says, "a été long à se dé-

velopper dans la littérature française, tant la vie intellectuelle et sociale, rapportant tout à l'homme, absorbait tout."

Every reader of the early *mémoires* knows how just is M. Fouillée's observation; how "l'aspect conscient, celui où l'être existe pour soi," totally absorbs the mind of the writer and of his friends. Search as one may, it is hard to find the briefest sketch of surroundings. We read of a movement from place to place; but the characters journey like Greek gods in clouds of their own, so do they enwrap themselves in the single atmosphere of Paris. We hear nothing about the country except the annoyance of traveling through it; nothing of nature save when she inconsiderately hampers the progress of the great; nothing of the provinces save their provinciality; nothing of Lyons or Marseilles save their distance from Paris. Reading these records one might easily believe the country quite homogeneous, — the scenery of Normandy exactly like the scenery of the Midi. These ladies and gentlemen seem to have gone about with their eyes shut. The Electress Sophia of Hanover (writing in French) makes a visit to Venice in 1680; asked to admire the town, she confesses that she finds it "extremely melancholy," though she likes the Corso, because there is no dust! The St. Gothard Pass to her is simply frightful and alarming, — when it is not "nasty," — and of the journey in her carriage from Bologna to Rome, she remarks that she did not

find it so tedious because she played cards all the way! The marshals Monluc and Bassompierre, the two Mancini sisters, *la reine* Margot, Madame, *mère du Régent*, rarely condescend to mention the outdoor world at all. Mademoiselle de Montpensier admires but one spectacle in her four volumes, and that is her father's funeral procession. "Celà parut très beau," she says, and adds characteristically, "et l'on dit que j'étois magnifique en tous que j'ordonnois." We have all accompanied Madame de Sévigné and the good Corbinelli a score of times in her traveling carriage, "*aux Rochers*," but we are rarely told anything about the house or the estate; and Madame de Grignan's journeys, we remember, were simply to be dreaded and bewailed. If Saint-Simon or Madame de Motteville, when they tell us how uncomfortably the court moved out to Versailles, should have described that, on their arrival, the sun shone, the sky was clear and mild, the fountains sported their jets of silver and the *talons rouges* gleamed upon the turf, the dullest reader would at once mark the passage as suspect.

Not until Rousseau brought nature into fashion and made possible such charming descriptive passages as occur in Marmontel, do we find the surroundings of a character considered as of value in drawing any picture of that character. This alone renders the pre-revolutionary *mémoires* as illuminative socially as they are narrow in other regards. Their strength and their weak-

ness lie alike in this: strength, in those graphic touches with which they portray the social group; weakness, in that they fail to relate their group to the world of humanity in general. Whereas Cardan and Alfieri are, first of all, men, and secondly, creative intelligences and Italians, the French *mémoiriste* is, first of all, a French person, secondly, soldier, poet, or *grande dame*, moving quite serenely in a little world apart.

Somewhat similar attitudes have been credited to the English of to-day; they are not true of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Englishman. Insular he may have been in certain customs and conventions, but a great and different world lay close about him, forced itself on his attention. The literature of journal and autobiography in England is full of atmosphere and objective detail. The rural life of seventeenth-century England has been painted for us as if it were the stage-setting of a drama. Nor is it true of the countryside alone. The London of Evelyn and Pepys—how much more vividly it is pictured than the Paris of Madame de Staal-Delaunay! And professional London, — the London of Symonds d'Ewes, or of Roger North, — how much more reality has it than the Paris of Bassompierre and Sully! Their French minds are turned inward upon personalities — theirs is the *aspect conscient*. And this is one reason why French autobiography surpasses the English.

The autobiography has touched in modern English

literature extremes of nobility and banality. Hordes of cheap and commonplace persons have been encouraged to mount the witness-stand. The *Lights and Shadows of my Pastorate* and *My Steps Heavenward* type of record exist in such profusion as to cheapen the value of evidence in general. At the same time, single instances are of unusual distinction and weight; and in the group of Quaker journalists our literature possesses an unique and complete record of a great religious movement. One cannot forget Egerton Brydges, Mill, and Harriet Martineau, nor the later scientists, whose worth is incalculable if their picturesqueness be less. If the general tone is less intellectual, the particular cases stand extremely high. Undeniably, however, autobiographical writing in England — with the single exception of the Quaker group — is sporadic until the end of the seventeenth century.

The casual glance will observe at once that the important English autobiography is comparatively modern. In J. Payne Collier's *Bibliographical Account of Early English Literature*, in four volumes, only one prose autobiography, Richard Vennar's, is considered. This is at the same date as Cardan and Cellini in Italy, as Monluc, Marguerite de Valois, and the chroniclers in France. As a fashion, the personal record in England dates practically from Rousseau; and this is why all English books of criticism are so naïf in their references to Jean Jacques as the primal autobiographer. They

invariably speak of him as the parent of the whole introspective crew.

Is there an important English self-study earlier than George Fox or Herbert of Cherbury? If we take the former as our first capital English self-delineator, we establish a level which must carry us over until we meet the name of Edward Gibbon, writing in 1789. The barren stretch in this particular field struck M. Taine at once, who comments on the aridity of the Puritan memoir, and its lack of personal qualities. But after Gibbon and Rousseau and the French Revolution, the fashion takes a firm hold on English literary energies; the autobiography widened, deepened, heightened steadily in value until it reached its zenith in the middle years of the nineteenth century.

The discussion, a few pages back, of the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, mentioned with emphasis as a cause of its vagueness the mental habit of confusing sentiment with fact. Our excuse for repeating the phrase is that it furnishes us with the reason why we possess no German autobiographies of definite standing and worth. Study of representative cases confirms the impression made by the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*; Richter, Kotzebue, Stilling, Lavater, with their Teutonic brothers, such as Hans Andersen and Louis Holberg, are all vitiated by the same poison. They may often be read with interest, they may contain curious or suggestive matter; but they are, in the main, psy-

chologically valueless. The emotion which was heightened to passion in Italy, and clipped, drilled, formalized to a cult of sentiment in France, has spread over the German pages a smudge of sentimentality, besmearing, hiding all it touches. Incidents typical of this characteristic in Kotzebue and in Andersen have already been given; if any one desires others, let him read the autobiography of Ludwig Spohr, or of Jung Stilling, or the singular life of the actress Karolin Bauer. From the recent autobiography of the novelist George Ebers, not one single valuable fact about the author can be obtained. Of course, there are Germans writing wholly under the influence of other literatures, who escape this danger. Such is the sixteenth-century schoolmaster, Thomas Platter; Heinrich Suso, the mystic; the great Erasmus; and, later, those remarkable women, the Electress Sophia, and Wilhelmine, Margravine of Bareith. But the latter, and Catherine II, once of Anhalt-Zerbst, write in French because of French inspiration, and the earlier German savants wrote in Latin. If we do not give up a section to the consideration of the German autobiography, it is because, as autobiography in our sense of the word, it does not exist.

If Americans consider that our literature has also signed the Declaration of Independence, then it is evident we can hardly lay claim to those of the Quaker journalists who came and labored here, and yet kept their allegiance. Those who do not call themselves

American, we may not call so. For all that, we have our classic autobiography, and it is strange that this example should be at once so distinctive and so typical, even at that date, of a separate nationality. Typical it still remains, for even now the ideal American is Franklin in little. The figure he presents, — prudent, sagacious, prosperous, — above all, prosperous, — with a healthy moral code not in the least fanatic or strained; with humor, energy and importance in affairs, — is not this still the American ideal at its best? Franklin, that large embodiment of somewhat small virtues, has left us a balanced and complete self-delineation, after reading which we have but one regret — that his are qualities which do not bear reduction from the heroic stature. It is not easy to say whether the influence of his record has been more useful or hurtful. Its balance is extraordinary: the writer is wholly reasonable; he is moved by common sense; he is consistently utilitarian in every event of his life. His attitude toward what he terms his *errata* is as gentle as we could wish it possible to be toward our own. Interesting and significant is the fact that his first *erratum* is "a violation of trust respecting money"; which might well be written in black and giant letters over the whole United States, from Maine to California. The second was his abandonment (for reasons of prudence) of the young woman to whom he was betrothed. He repairs the fault as best he may later on, and, after

his *Wanderjahr*, renews the engagement and marries her.

Toward vice he is also wholly utilitarian. "The intrigues with low women that fell in my way," he writes, "were attended with some expense, great inconvenience, besides a continual risk to my health." The emphasis here is adjusted to suggest that if one could moderate the expense, bear the inconvenience, and avoid the risk to health, Franklin knew no other reasons for self-restraint. Poor Burns — how deep a sinner, and, worse than all, how unprosperous! — has a clearer insight, a more poignant accent. Even at its full stream of splendid energy, Franklin's intellectual development is, in a measure, hampered by his expediency. Practically a free-thinker in religion, he yet never mentions his free-thought without apology. If he sets systematically at work to weed himself of faults, to "arrive at moral perfection," he gives up the task, lest it "might be a kind of foppery in morals, which if it were known might make me ridiculous." Again, we find him, even in his inner life, governed by his cardinal principle of mundane success. Seeing ourselves in this great man, — perhaps the most typically American of all our great men, — what small, what ungenerous creatures do we after all appear! Could we have pointed, as the quintessence of our national character, but to some courageous idealist!

But enough of carping. Some of us must walk the

earth, yet reverencing still that type of "beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain." For the reader, the value of Franklin's autobiography lies in our being able to trace therein the growth of uncommon mental powers, developed by self-education and given an exceptional field of activity. The intelligence with which he governed his own life and affairs, became intellect when he turned it to the service of the country at large. His measure, persuasiveness, and wisdom, used among men, carried immediately into execution the projects of an ingenious and benevolent mind. The man's powers were both dignified and expanded by success. His autobiography traces for us the growth of personal thrift into communal economy; of petty ingenuity into great invention; of individual industry into a spirit fit to animate a people; and of intellectual understanding of others, from the tact which enabled him to keep on terms with a drunken partner, into that firm sagacity to which we owe so stable a part of our national existence.

# CHAPTER XII

## MEMORY

"I WILL soar then beyond this power of my nature also; and I enter the roomy chambers of memory, where are the treasures of countless images. . . . And I discern the scent of lilies from that of violets while smelling nothing; and I prefer honey to grape-syrup, a smooth thing to a rough, though I neither taste nor handle, but only remember. These things do I within the vast chamber of my memory. . . . There also do I meet with myself and recall myself . . . and when I speak, the images of all I speak about are present out of the same treasury of memory. Great is this power of memory, exceeding great, oh my God! — an inner chamber large and boundless. Who has plumbed the depths thereof? Yet it is a power of mine, and appertains unto my nature; nor do I myself grasp all that I am. Therefore is the mind too narrow to contain itself. . . . A great admiration rises upon me; astonishment seizes me. . . . And men go forth to wonder at the height of mountains, the huge waves of the sea, the broad flow of the rivers, the extent of the ocean, and the courses of the stars, and omit to wonder at themselves. . . ."

In these magnificent sentences of Augustin — which, in truth, approach the accent of Hamlet's "What a

thing is man!" — we read all the wonders of a new outlook. Why should man marvel at the world and leave unregarded the perpetual marvels at work within him? Chief apartment in the palace of mystery is "that roomy chamber of memory." The first sustained effort of self-examination brings to Augustin a sense of exhaustion and bewilderment.

"Truly, O Lord, I labor therein and labor in myself. . . . But what is nearer to me than myself? And behold I am not able to comprehend the force of my own memory though I cannot name myself without it. . . . Of what nature am I? A life various, manifold, and exceeding vast. . . . Through it all do I run to and fro and fly; I penetrate on this side and on that, so far as I am able, and nowhere is there an end."

Although this wonder of memory has never been so deeply, so truly voiced as in these sentences, yet as a wonder it persists in page after page of personal narrative. Rare is the document that does not begin with specified first recollections, or with some allusion to the earliest memories. In historical chronicles written in the first person, this early remembrance may be the only subjective fact recorded on the first page or two of the author's introduction. The age at which it occurs is sometimes noted (though we could wish more frequently), and in the case of important persons this becomes interesting and suggestive. The consensus of experience gives it between three and four years, as

the lists show.[1] In regard to the other cases, there would appear to be as many remembering at two years as after four years. Casanova recalls nothing before eight years and four months, which is as unusually late as his sexual experiences were early, for they began at ten years old.

An earlier first remembrance does not, by any means, imply a generally powerful memory. Alfieri, Rousseau and Renan remember nothing before their fifth year, yet they possessed unusually strong memories. Cellini, Goethe, Goldoni, Cardan and John Ruskin were four years old, or thereabouts, at the incident of the first remembrance. Those whose recollection goes to two years and earlier, are apt to connect it with some slight shock—a fall, an illness, a death in the family, or news of the Lisbon earthquake. William Hutton remembers a whip at two, an ocular delusion before three. John Galt says: "Memory carries me transactions that must have happened when I was less than two years of age, yet I have not a very good general memory." Jean Paul Richter goes back still further: "I am able to bring from my twelfth or at furthest my fourteenth month, one pale little remembrance . . . that a poor scholar loved me much and carried me in his arms." The age given is not to be received without question, yet the recollection is a typically childish one.

Herbert of Cherbury, whose childhood was sickly, and

[1] In Appendix D.

who writes, "It were so long before I began to speak that many thought I would ever be dumb," gives a curious first memory. "The very furthest thing I remember," he says, "is that when I understood what was said by others, I did yet forbear to speak, lest I should utter something that were imperfect or impertinent." The strangeness of this, which could not have been seriously credited but for what he tells us of delicacy and retardation, lies in its subjectivity; for, as we shall see later, the normal first memory is, almost without exception, objective. In contrast to Herbert, we find Lord Brougham talking fluently at eight months old; and yet first remembering the story told by his grandmother of his parents' marriage, fully two years later in his life. The first memory of the Cardinal de Bernis was of being weaned, and also of being amazed at shadows on the wall; he must have been less than two years old. Herbert Spencer avows that he only "remembers that he once remembered" a keen dread of being alone. William Bell Scott's *Autobiographical Notes* give his theory that "the earliest remembrances we retain from childhood do not refer to the externals of life . . . but relate to the difficulties of consciousness." Jerome Cardan supports this idea with his dumb, struggling, early memory of night-terrors and phantasms; and so does Harriet Martineau, for her innumerable childish fears are the very first thing she can recall. Blind, unreasoning dread of people, of dusk, of

the star-lit sky, of nightmares themselves, and the fear of nightmares. "I had scarcely any respite from terror," she says of those early recollections.

What sort of things do people remember? asks the curious reader. A. J. C. Hare remembered a big dog's knocking him down; Cellini, a salamander and a beating; George Sand, a bad fall and a cut, bleeding and excitement; Ludwig Spohr, a smell; Edward Gibbon, insubordination and a whipping; Thomas Holcroft, playing with his parents before three years old; Dr. Joseph Priestley, playing with a pin; Goethe, the house where he was born; and the Highland lady, Mrs. Grant, "some West Indian seeds, pretty, red and shiny, with black spots on them." These are typical childish impressions of another type from the terrors of Cardan, Spencer, Sonia Kovalevsky and Miss Martineau; or from the states of consciousness of Herbert, Job Scott the Quaker, and Solomon Maimon. A third type recalls surroundings, atmosphere, background. Of these are Chateaubriand, Edgar Quinet, Lamartine, Dumas, and Alfred Russel Wallace. John Ruskin observes especially that we first remember places. A parting, whether temporary or eternal, often makes the first deep impression on the mind of a little child. Alexandre Dumas remembers nothing before his father's death, neither does the godly Robert Blair, who says — poor baby! — that "at his interring, I used my bairnly endeavoring to be in the grave before him."

Baron Marbot and Colonel Meadows Taylor, like George Sand, recollect a childish accident; and Josiah Flynt Willard's first memory is of the first manifestation of his life-long passion for running away. Sir Symonds d'Ewes, that learned lawyer, was not likely to pass over his first memory, for at three years old he crept into his grandfather's wine-cellar and drank himself into unconsciousness. "It brought me very near my grave," he declares, and, as a matter of reaction, caused him to loathe all liquor for the rest of his life. Scott's friend, "Jupiter" Carlyle, remembers the drowning of a boy comrade, to whom he had confided his halfpence to buy some sweets. The loss of the sweets made an indelible impression. Alexander Bain remembers being at dame's school at three years old; and Massimo d'Azeglio remembers posing for a "putto" to a painter friend of Alfieri's, when he was a restless little child of four. It is rather curious to find the pains of childhood persisting over and beyond the joys. There is not a single one among the memories just cited that is of a delight; in fact, the only definite case here of joyful first memory appears to be Goldoni, in whom the gift of a puppet-show, when he was four years old, produced transports of pleasure which have survived all other impressions.

If we glance back over these first memories, the statement that the normal first memory is objective seems to be sustained. The autobiographer himself ob-

serves this, for we find Alexandre Dumas making a special note that incidents and places are the clear pictures which his mind retains. Alfred Russel Wallace comments especially on the vivid character of objects and surroundings in his memory, whereas, like Dumas, even personalities are to him half-effaced. If, therefore, the usual recollection takes so definite a form as red seeds, or a big dog, or a whipping, it behooves one to look a little more closely at these few cases wherein it has taken a subjective form. Terror, pure and simple, formed the first remembrance of Cardan, of Harriet Martineau, of Sonia Kovalevsky, and of Herbert Spencer, alike only in that they were delicate, sickly, and over-sensitive. Maimon's sense of childish subtlety (he got the better of an argument at three and was rewarded by sugar), and Herbert's sense of childish reticence, and Job Scott's memory of "the serious impressions and contemplations" of his feelings in meeting, are linked together by their evidence of a somewhat abnormal childhood. These seven cases of subjective first memories belong, as we see, to five men and two women. Three of the seven are scientists, three students and writers, and one a religious fanatic. Diverse as they seem, in sex, occupation, talent, nationality and date, they are alike in this, that they all were unhealthy children. Cardan, as we have read, was an abnormally delicate boy; Miss Martineau had dyspepsia and was deaf; Sonia was extremely nervous;

Herbert Spencer thinks himself below par as a child; Job Scott records a series of illnesses and melancholies. Maimon gives no evidence of ill health during childhood, but, none the less, describes a condition of abnormal precocity and nervous overstrain.

Before quitting the subject of first memory, therefore, it seems reasonable to point out that in healthy and normal cases it takes an objective form, and that this first remembrance becomes subjective only under some abnormal influence. Infirmity, sickness, or nervous strain, governed those memories which hold keen terrors, hideous nightmares, religious awe, or exaggerated states of self-consciousness; and it may be said, in passing, that the specialist in child-study will gain more than he imagines from an examination of the records left by these seven, together with those of Alfieri, Agrippa d'Aubigné, Robert Blair, Goethe, Guibert de Nogent, J. S. Mill, Rousseau, George Sand, Marie Bashkirtsev, Henry Alline, Bellarmin, J. A. Symonds, P. G. Hamerton, M. A. Schimmelpenninck, Vico, Robert Southey, Zerah Colburn, Ristori, Salvini, Samuel Roberts, Edmund Gosse, Anne Gilbert, Georg Brandès, Lord Brougham, William Hayley, Robert and William Chambers, Guido Sorelli, G. Giusti, William Hutton, John Ruskin, George Fox, Jeanne de la Mothe-Guyon, Teresa, H. Heine, with many other religious documents, and minor fragmentary autobiographies.

Frequent as are the accounts of what the self-student

first recalls, it is exceedingly rare to find a writer noting the beginnings of self-consciousness. Such as do so are usually modern. Roger North, born in 1653, observes of his commencing school: "I began to have a sense of myself." Jean Paul Richter's description of the same moment is very curious: "I stood one afternoon, a very young child, at the house door, when all at once that inward consciousness *I am a me*, came like a flash of lightning from Heaven, and has remained ever since;" and he adds, with *naïveté:* "Deceptions of memory are here scarcely imaginable." Alfred Russel Wallace, the scientist, and William Bell Scott, the painter, draw similar experiences as to suddenness and intensity.

The latter is minutely described: "One evening when turning up the turf, I found it swarming with annulose and centipedal creatures to me previously undreamt of . . . supernatural, yet vital activities. . . . I rose up straight. . . . I was apart from these and from everything else, alone, in an antagonistic creation, accountable only to myself for preservation and well-being." And he goes on to declare that the change was from "the repose of instinct to that of thoughtful perplexity and unrest, responsibility and isolation, never to be again lost." Edmund Gosse, at six, suddenly underwent the "consciousness of self as a force and as a companion." The circumstances attendant on this case are particularly curious and interesting. William

Bell Scott's experience in certain of its features; the unexpectedness, for instance, and the intensity, markedly resembles that of religious conversion. In the strict sense of a "turning about," it is conversion, indeed. Sir Capel-Lofft says: "almost all the active powers of my mind have come upon me thus suddenly like moments of grace." Although, as we have seen, the inrush of self-consciousness is very rarely observed and recorded, yet there is enough evidence to warrant us in believing that it varies immensely with the individual, and is by no means attached to a special age.

Richter, Scott and Gosse were "very young children"; Wallace and North were schoolboys. There are cases where we can see that the subject must have been a youth — cases like Lofft, De Thou, or George Fox. Mark Pattison describes himself as too childish at seventeen to receive any impression whatever from *Paradise Lost*, and as not having any consciousness of his subjective self much before twenty or twenty-one. Development was similarly late in the case of Georg Brandès. Intellectual growth, no doubt, with its infinite variations in the individual, must govern the experience.

When it comes to the accuracy of these early first impressions, the autobiographer himself is not without his doubt. This we have already quoted in Herbert Spencer's case. "Of incidents in childhood my remembrances have assumed that secondary form which I

suspect they mostly do in advanced life — I simply remember that I once remembered." The implication here that advancing years dull the early memories, is not borne out by the bulk of the evidence. Psychologists point out that, in general, a man in late middle life has clearer pictures of his childhood than when he was twenty-five. Turgenev expresses this idea in a more literary form when he says: "But to bend a cold, clear gaze over all one's past life — as a traveler turns and looks from high mountains on the plain he has passed through — is only possible at a certain age."

In the introduction to her autobiography, Sonia Kovalevsky expresses the doubt and analyzes the familiar difficulty. "I should like to know," she asks, "whether any one can definitely fix that moment of his existence when for the first time a distinct conception of his own personality, his own *ego*, the first glimpse of conscious life arose within him. I cannot. . . . When I begin to sort out and classify my earliest recollections . . . these disperse before me. I can never succeed in evoking a single one of these recollections in all its purity; I involuntarily add something foreign to it during the very process of recalling it." Professor William James in his *Psychology* states, as a generalization, what Sonia so vividly describes as a personal experience. Both of them thus take another view-point from Richter, or from William Bell Scott, which it is instructive to contrast with the recorders of "moments

of grace." With all his effort to understand the miracles of mental growth, extending, as we have seen, to psychological problems in themselves, Cardan excludes memory, taking it for granted as a basis, and firmly relying upon its data.

The controversy as to memory in the sexes, has assumed the form, at the present time, of a mass of general statement, very slightly supported on either side by particular instances. School records are made to form the basis of various conclusions, useful so far as they go, no doubt, but bearing the vital objection of dealing with abilities as yet immature and unformed. As a result of these statistics, the two sides are most contradictory in their dogma. On the one hand is the view of Dr. Hall,[1] that "Woman excels in memory. . . . Her thought is more concrete and individual; she is more prone to associations," etc. This view upholds woman as the ideal letter-writer and domestic recorder, because of her gifts for visualizing concrete images and connecting them. On the other hand, the German writer Otto Weiniger, in his book, *Sex and Character*,[2] largely rests his burden of proof of woman's mental inferiority on her lack of "continuity of memory." "When a woman looks back over her life," he maintains, "and lives again her experiences, there is presented no continuous, unbroken stream, but only a few scattered points."

[1] "Adolescence," vol. i, p. 568. [2] Page 124.

The memory tables[1] will be found to contain many female names as furnishing data for the first recollection. They have purposely not been classed apart from the male, in order that they might not be examined with any shade of difference in the mind of the reader. That they are fewer in number goes without saying; the same proportion continues through every department of literature; yet the evidence furnished here does not appear to show any lack of continuity. It is probably unfair to compare book with book in this regard: for instance, the *Wahrheit und Dichtung* shows an infinitely smaller sense of continuity of memory than the *Histoire de ma Vie*. Yet, even laying side by side the strong man autobiography with the strong woman autobiography,— Mill, as an example, beside George Sand, — the result does not annihilate the constructive effect of the latter. Woman has not, as yet, written the Cardan type of self-study, and on the side of her emotional life she appears to be naturally more secretive and reticent than man; but she yields nothing to him in vividness, power, or continuity of recollection. The breadth of mind in the male autobiographer, his tendency to connect his own personality with the world at large, causes him frequent lapses of recollection, breaks in the continuity; while the more limited range of the woman's interests permits her memories to move without gap from

[1] In Appendix D.

event to event, from state of mind to state of mind. Can one say of such autobiographers as Marguerite de Valois, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Madame de Staal-Delaunay, George Sand, Miss Martineau, the Margravine of Bareith, Mrs. Oliphant, that their recollections present "no continuous stream, but a few scattered points"?

It is pleasant to find aspects during our ramble which we need not classify or differentiate, some blooms over which one needs not botanize. The attributes of the sexes occupy so much attention to-day, that the subject appears to shift like a disputed boundary line between rival countries. Now the raider from this side, now the discoverer from that, sets up his flag and claims a strip of territory. How much of woman is in man, and how much of man is in woman, is a discussion perpetually in search of fresh evidence. Once for all, then, these pages can aid it little, for there is no sex to the autobiographer; on this field the writer stands or falls by the performance itself. The great self-student may be either man or woman; it is only required that he be thoroughly the one or the other. Equipment for this task is as much woman's as man's; each has his special candor, each his temperamental reticence. As regards memory alone, the woman's is usually more intimate, more personal, more limited and more complete; and the data furnished by both may be used without undue attention to the fact of sex. Com-

parative study tends to show, at least, that those powers of memory which bring about and confirm the autobiographical impulse, belong to both sexes, and place the results of self-study equally within the reach of both.

Perchance this is by the way. Our path mounts at times the little eminence of argument to stand upon the little hill of theory, or merely wanders between the flowering hedgerows of allusion, or pauses to admire a distant view or to lament the untidy borders of a neighbor's garden. The reader, who is our walking companion, must be content this should be so.

Observation of memory in the autobiographer sustains the prevalent theory of its relation to genius. Among the cases of persistently weak memories not a single one is a mind of the first order. Though it may develop late, a strong, if selective, memory seems to be a first requisite of intellectual power. But the quality of memories must vary, and just as different physical training may develop different muscles, so special mental training must produce different kinds of memory. The verbal memory of the *littérateur*, the face-and-character memory of the politician, the date-and-event memory of the historian, — these may alter the treatment of the same facts. Pasquier's four volumes are a tribute to his general powers of memory, yet he declares he could never learn by rote, word for word.

Some *mémoiristes* omit all dates; others lay a stress on them which their value does not warrant. Rousseau never gave an accurate date, but how accurate was his memory and transcription of *feeling!* So the "roomy chamber" is furnished anew for every occupant.

# CHAPTER XIII

## RELIGION

Though the religious confession has been thoroughly studied, though it is the only branch of autobiographical writing which up to the present has been systematically classified in order to receive scientific attention, this study has been individual rather than comparative. Two lines of investigation have been respectively brought to bear upon important examples, the psychical and the medical. The philosopher and the student of religions, has consulted these documents for the purpose of collating from their individual religious experiences data to elucidate and confirm certain theories as to general religious experience. In their hands the cases resemble a series of dots which, drawn on paper, form a line having a certain curve and length. Before these records can be of service in this way, a pre-supposition must exist that they are normal, representative. The student of religious movements and emotions makes use of them because he believes them to display feelings, ideas, exaltations common to a large section of humanity, descriptive, in more or less measure, of the experience of many earnest and thoughtful persons. An Augustin or a Teresa, he believes, must simply voice the common ideas accompanying certain normal and

definite religious conditions; and the student, therefore, feels warranted in his induction as to the power of religion over the souls of men.

The second view of the religious confession is directly antagonistic to this one, although the extent of its antagonism has not, as yet, been clearly demonstrated. This point of view, denying the state of mysticism *per se*, regards the religious confession as an abnormal manifestation, its existence as a proof of the singularity of the subject, and its data as directly pathological. The very incidents of exaltation, the very intensity and variety of emotions, which to the religious student are indicative of the strength of a "something not ourselves which makes for righteousness," in this view form but the syndrome of neuropathic conditions. Such records are, therefore, far from normal. Their writers are *not* to be regarded as representative of countless unwritten cases, *not* to be regarded as representative of common experience, but rather the reverse. Religious strain, religious excitement, religious depression, whether considered as the manifestations of hysteria, or as a form of insanity, or as a neurosis, are, in any event, to be regarded not as general, not as normal, but as individual and as pathological.

According to this conception, the miracles attending on what we have been lately taught to call the "phenomena of conversion," are symptomatic of abnormality. The visual and auditory hallucinations, the

great lights from heaven, or voices from on high, are not to be considered as intrinsically differing from secular hallucinations. They are no more to be taken as indicating the presence in human life of any non-natural or non-material influence whatever, than the frequent delusion of the insane that they are being persecuted may be taken to indicate that persecution is an imbedded instinct in the human race. The fact that these hallucinations are in many cases unaccompanied by any other symptoms of illness or abnormality, would serve, in this opinion, simply to isolate the malady. The fact that they are associated with genius, with a high ethical sense, with a high degree of creative and intellectual ability, does not shake the theory. Broadly stated, it is based simply upon the syllogism that hallucinations are abnormal, that if the religious leader has hallucinations he is abnormal, no matter what may be the quality of the man, the nature of the hallucination, or the æsthetic beauty of the whole case.

Such are the two chief aspects of the religious confession, and according to them it has been examined. Books like Professor William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and Professor Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion* investigate it from the first point of view; men like Ribot and Grasset maintain the pathological. To the second, Richard Burton, in the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, has unconsciously added the weight of his

erudition, for the section on religious melancholy is packed, though all unwittingly, with examples to maintain the neuropathical opinion.

The difficulty with the second aspect — which is undoubtedly favored by men of science at the present time — is the difficulty of establishing the norm. The psychological study of religion is entirely modern; so recent, indeed, that it can turn to no storehouse of accredited facts, but must snatch its material out of the air, like a conjurer with oranges. It has succeeded in maintaining and upholding certain similarities which bring closely home to us the ties of human nature, binding alike the Quaker and the Catholic, the Súfi, the Buddhist, and the Jew; and it has succeeded in showing us that power of emotion which propels the religious idea. Religious manifestation invariably brings the emotions into play, and in quantity and strength is governed by the quantity and strength of those emotions. This fact immensely affects the written document; and when we remember that the creative literary impulse has also in itself a heightening effect on emotion, we see that we are not apt to be furnished with the religious experiences and feelings of perfectly balanced and controlled people. Francis Galton, in *The Human Faculty*, declares: "It would be instructive to make a study of the working religions of good and able men of all nations — and also as to their happiness and unhappiness." Such a study would

aid in setting up some normal standard by which the variations might be judged. But, above all, in examining such testimony, the quality of the witness becomes of importance. In Professor James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, although the author declares his intention to confine himself to "those more developed subjective phenomena recorded in literature, produced by articulate and fully self-conscious men in works of piety and autobiography," there is apparently no attempt at any standard of credibility. The sincerity of Augustin or Teresa is treated as on the same plane with that of Billy Bray, the street evangelist, or that of the latest Salvation Army convert. Moreover, although comparison in itself implies certain similarities, and can only be useful within the same limits, Professor James yet uses indifferently the witness of Augustin and of the Reverend Mr. Skinner. With so many documents extant of serious intention, and by warranted hands, it would seem hardly necessary to include the Christian Scientists, the Reverend Mr. Skinner, and the street evangelists — "Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their crew." And this, not because they are less religious, but because what they tell of their experiences is less trustworthy and less credible. The careful work done by Professor Starbuck is open to the same objections, which become intensified when we read the answers of those camp-meeting and revivalist converts to the list of questions offered by him as better worth scientific attention than autobiographies in books.

As well might one suggest to the student of poetry that he had better omit Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, and devote his attention to the works of Tupper or to the *Botanic Garden* of Dr. Darwin! The analogy is not so remote. Religious conversion is an outcome of emotion, just as poetry is an outcome of emotion; and such emotion may be cheap and transient, or vital and distinguished. Following out Professor Starbuck's idea, the student of poetry might maintain that Tupper and Dr. Darwin were more modern, and were therefore acted upon in poetical mood by conditions nearer to our own; that their work was less heightened, and therefore, more sincere; that the student could more easily comprehend the spirit of real poetry from them, because they were more nearly at his own level! The fallacy of this reasoning is a fallacy very prevalent to-day, in all sorts of work claiming to deal scientifically with literature, by ardent investigators of more science than culture. Unfortunately, both acquirements are necessary when one wishes to differentiate between the religious sentiments of an Augustin and a Peter Cartwright. This is best seen in the total effect of Professor Starbuck's own book, in which the massing of cheap, shallow experience causes the reader to doubt and derogate the entire business of conversion, which he would wish to respect, if not revere. And, finally, it is true that the same impediments to candor and fullness in the autobiography, affect, in still greater

measure, the *questionnaire*. This method is open to the same adverse influences, and is without a final corrective in the shape of spontaneous autobiographical intention. In any estimate of the forces which act primarily upon the imaginations and emotions of men, truth can only be obtained by studying these in their purest essence, at work upon energetic and creative minds.

It would seem that any comparative study of the religious confession must be undertaken within definite limits; like compared with like. Bearing Galton's suggestion in mind, autobiographies may be fruitfully examined for their attitudes toward the question of religious duty and religious emotion, and for an estimate of normal or abnormal characteristics in this regard. Professor James suggests this when he points out "the enormous diversities which the spiritual lives of different men exhibit," and when he maintains that "the psychology of individual types of character has hardly begun to be even sketched as yet." No more fascinating page in the book of life lies open to us, in which he who runs may read.

To whatever the initial impetus over men's minds is due, that religious emotion possesses the rise, sweep, and onward movement of a wave, is now generally granted. Where this wave starts, how it passes from slow to swift, from moderation to extreme, from the bounds of health to those of disease, has been and is being constantly the theme of investigation. The passage of this

force over the mind and life of the self-observer is plainly traceable, and tends to link him, in its manifestations, with other contemporary self-observers submitting to the same influence. A group of religious confessions forms a nucleus of forces, — an eddy in the larger current. Personal influence and imitation cause such forces to affect the minor cases grouped about the major, furnishing us with slighter but similar data, slighter but similar phenomena. Thus is formed Professor Le Bon's "psychological crowd." The very first essential in the classification and analysis of the religious confession, thus becomes its grouping, and, secondarily, the comparison of group with group.

Mention has already been made of the freshness and flexibility of the early pietistic records, as contrasted with the conventionality of the later devotional writers. The most clearly-defined group of these, the one which for our purpose is best fitted for examination, owing to the number and richness of its cases, is the Quaker group. No other religious movement has left so large a mass of classified material. The autobiographical intention with the early Friends became a dogma, as it were, of their belief, and to leave behind a journal or an autobiography was almost a requirement of faith. The Quaker journals form in themselves a complete library; they are full of incident and adventure on land and sea, in the old world as in the new; and they display upon every page qualities of courage and steadfastness, of

simplicity and kindliness, which move the heart.[1] At the same time, they show a common lack of imagination in dealing with their creed; there is astonishingly little vitality to their religious expression. When they write of perplexities, of conversion, of prayer, of meeting, they all employ the same style, the same terms of expression. In such passages it is hard to tell if you are reading Woolman or Ellwood, Chalkley, Davies, Edmundson, or Crook. Though there exists the quaintest individuality in the character of these men, yet the religious color of their minds appears to be as uniform and as dun-colored as was the prescribed dress of their society. The stamp of George Fox is upon every piece of these differing metals, and we are led, therefore, back to Fox's Journal, not only as an influential personal narrative, but as the earliest important self-study in English, and one of the few later documents which has an influence approaching that of our three primary types.

Fox's biographer verifies the clearly presented image of himself; for, although Fox's religious prepossession is complete, he lacks none of the qualities of the sincere self-delineator. We have noticed how, in telling of his

[1] Cases used in this work: (1) Geo. Fox, (2) Wm. Edmundson, (3) John Crook, (4) Rich. Davies, (5) Henry Hull, (6) Jane Pearson, (7) Alice Hayes, (8) Eliz. Ashbridge, (9) Eliz. Stirredge, (10) Oliver Sansom, (11) Stephen Crisp, (12) John Woolman, (13) Thos. Ellwood, (14) Thos. Chalkley, (15) James Gough, (16) Samuel Bownas, (17) Job Scott.

childhood, he avoids the factitious element introduced by Crook, Davies, and others — the making oneself out to be a lost and miserable sinner, for the sake of affording proper contrast to the later conversion. "In my very young years, I had a gravity and stayedness of mind and spirit not usual in children. . . . When I came to eleven years of age I knew pureness and righteousness, and people had generally a love to me for my innocency and honesty." Sentences like these remind one of Teresa: "On m'a toujours vu avec plaisir"; and they must be emphasized to show the superiority of such minds to mere literary influences, such as beset weaker types. To listen to John Bunyan one would suppose that his youth was steeped in an utter villainy, without a possibility of goodness. Idleness, cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming, left him never a moment's freedom from wickedness; and the same is true of George Whitefield. Now, Fox's note is as intense as Bunyan's, his poignancy greater, his religious zeal surely no less; the difference is that Fox's power of self-study works as a leaven in his most frenzied moments of fanaticism. One cannot say which feels the deeper in religious matters, but one can see plainly which is the student of human nature.

When we lay Fox and Augustin side by side in these pages which deal with their terrible religious upheaval and conversion, we find a great many points in common between the peasant and the man of the world, between

the young mystic and the learned sensualist. The actual phenomena of their conversion are similar — the darkness, the torment, the inward light, the inward voice. But these brought to the Bishop peace, to Fox not peace but a sword. He has that intense passion of religious zeal which never lets him rest, and his gift of describing this is, perhaps, his greatest gift. His prose has epic moments when it stops the heart.

"As I was walking with several friends I lifted up my head and saw three steeple-house spires, and they struck at my life. I asked them what place that was? They said: 'Litchfield.' Immediately the word of the Lord came to me that I must go thither. I stept away, and came within a mile of Litchfield, where, in a great field, shepherds were keeping their sheep. Then was I commanded to pull off my shoes. I stood still, for it was winter, and the word of the Lord was like a fire in me."

Undoubtedly, it is to this gift of expression of their leader that the Quakers owe their whole body of conventional religious phraseology. It is Fox who gave birth to such idioms as his "mind was retired to the Lord," or that "great exercises and weights came upon me," or "I was moved by the Lord towards Friends in the north of England;" thus laying upon divine guidance the simplest operations of the will. His followers most eagerly adopted both the phraseology and the spiritual attitude from which it sprung; with all that was directly owing to Fox's understanding of others and

of himself. This utter passivity, this laying of one's slightest action on the responsibility of God, he saw, just as Jeanne de la Mothe-Guyon saw it, to be the greatest power he could use to resist persecution, to harass the persecutor, and to uphold and comfort the spirit of the persecuted. It gave him a self-confidence which permitted him to use it in and out of season, and he notes his extraordinary insight into the spiritual condition of others. Now, all this is very like Madame de la Mothe-Guyon, and one may pause to observe why Quakerism prevailed, when Quietism died still-born. The reason appears to be that Fox's self-study gave him an unwonted understanding of the craving in the minds of others, while Madame Guyon understood nothing about herself, and, thus, little about the people close to her. Her preaching had its effect, but it is not the effect of Fox, when "I did so shake and shatter them that they wondered." Finally, one must not forget Fox's fierce and vindictive humility, wherein he gloats over difficulties and persecutions. His uneven, overcharged temperament brought about constant quarrels with his friends; while his analysis of these disputes and his share in them, shows how sincere was his introspection, and what power it gave him as a religious leader over the souls of others.

Every day we see about us examples of the conventionalizing of a vital phrase. Dropped from the speech or writings of some shrewd and penetrating mind, it is

seized on by the people, incorporated into existing ideas, attached — almost as a technicality — to the phraseology of certain subjects. A humorous case of this kind will occur to every one — the "innocuous desuetude" of Mr. Cleveland. In the religious life — where expression is to many persons difficult — a gift like George Fox's of crystallizing the mood, of vitalizing with language some more or less vague emotion, is bound to persist. When we realize, in addition, that the bulk of his followers were simple, unlettered folk, we understand why they did not seek to alter their leader's phrases. As it is, they one and all repeat them without change, using them much as other sects use the formulæ of church service. The effect extended beyond the Quakers themselves, and may be noticed, to a certain extent, in later Wesleyan and Methodist movements; for a similarity exists through the whole religious revival initiated by the Puritans and Quakers.

Not so the mediæval pietistic writers; not so the religious minds which followed the earlier Christians. There is no convention here, but rather a wonderful individuality; no possibility is there of mistaking one for another. Augustin provided an impetus, but he did not furnish any technical vocabulary. There is a freshness of feeling, a flexibility of phrase, a vitality, a color about the mediæval religious confession, which is wholly lacking in later examples. Also, it is more personal as a record; less concerned with the outside

world. The Quaker enthusiast is, first of all, an evangelist, anxious to convert others to his special form of belief, and most occupied with its increase and progress in the world. His work lies among other men. Not thus Augustin, Paulinus, Suso, Guibert, Teresa. Their chief concern is with their own souls and the phenomena attending on them; their interest in you is but indirect. They are surrounded by marvels and ecstasies of feeling and vision, which they seek to understand. They pray, watch, and fast; their gaze is fixed upon heaven. Small affair is it of theirs, comparatively speaking, that you should believe. This subjective intensity becomes a focus of religious excitement which often continues to exist as a point of force long after the death of the mystic himself. To whatever this may be due, — insanity, semi-insanity, hysteria, says one camp; divine manifestation, religious instinct, declares the other, — it is, nevertheless, true that an extreme subjectivity gives it persistency and lends it a literary value. Had Augustin, had Teresa, spent their force in trying to convert every street-sweeper to an especial form of creed, what might we not have lost! Instead, they endeavored to place on record and to understand the working of certain obscure forces within themselves, and the world, whether of science or philosophy, is richer for the data they have preserved.

The autobiography of Teresa of Avila is particularly valuable because of the writer's healthy mental attitude

and undoubted mental vigor. Mrs. Bradley Gilman, in her life of Teresa (a lay biography), dwells on the humanness and womanliness of her personality. It is not as a theologian, not as a mystic, that she appeals chiefly to us to-day; it is rather as a vital, energetic, and complete woman, intellectual enough to protest in her preface against the mandate of her confessor that she was to enter into full details of the Lord's grace toward her, but as to her own sins to maintain an extreme reserve. This, she declares, was not possible; she carries her candor to the point of omitting no data which permit us to comprehend her case. A long illness and, during convalescence, a volume of Augustin — thus this enthusiastic and emotional creature is set upon the way of mysticism. Up to this time her convent life had been lax, her piety but formal; she had experienced an unhappy love-affair, and had been romantically interested in one of her confessors. But now the high current of her vitality is all turned inward; she begins to live inwardly alone. The outer world fades and is dim, a mystic world opens. The phenomena at first are slight. "J'étais tout-à-coup saisie du sentiment de la présence de Dieu," she says simply, adding, "Ce n'était pas une vision." But the visions did not delay, and, under the favoring physical and surrounding conditions, Teresa passes onward, step by step, from ecstasy to vision and to hallucination. Exhausting reactions follow: she battles horribly with

the demon, who stuns her ears with blasphemies, or affrights her in the shape of "a little negro all of flame." With Madame Guyon this phantom becomes "a horrible, devilish face in a bluish light." Unseen hands, Teresa believes, lift her from the earth; Satan in person pinches Madame Guyon. There is nothing unusual about all this, as the neurologist assures us. The unusual fact about Teresa is that she continues to preserve so high a degree of practical energy and executive ability. Apart from her mysticism, she is a woman of intellect, healthy vigor, and healthy imagination, not without humor; all her actions show practical common-sense. She looks carefully to the sanitary conditions of her new convent at Avila, and to the health of its inmates; she writes alert and interesting letters; she carefully nurses a sick relative, over whom most mystics would have merely prayed; she reads a great deal, and not only theology. She stands before us, not in any sense distorted, or abnormal, or diseased physically, and as such she stands alone in the annals of hagiography.

The case approaching nearest to Teresa in this respect is that of Patrick, for the *Confessio Patricius* can only be the outpouring of a genuine and healthy soul. Writing early enough to have come under the direct influence of Augustin and Paulinus, Patrick evidently feels the contrast of his rustic, Celtic illiteracy. Humility is his key-note, simple and sincere. "The rudest and least of all the faithful, and most contemptible to

very many," he terms himself. "I blush . . . and greatly fear to expose my unskilfulness . . . I cannot express myself with clearness and brevity," these shamefaced phrases are in sharp contrast with Augustin's lyrical and literary outpourings, or the exalted security of Teresa. But Patrick, though humble, is steadfast over what he calls his "drivel"; he presents a clear and touching picture of a young convert, fasting, praying, herding cattle in the wilderness of Britain, and harkening to the voice which directed him to Ireland. The supernatural side of his experiences follows hard on the fasting period; but Patrick is, throughout this fragment, the practical missionary, rather than the mystic.

Teresa and Patrick are sporadic cases of mystical development; there appears to have been no hereditary predisposition, and no markedly sufficient surrounding causes. The case of Guibert de Nogent is valuable exactly on the other count. Few records furnish so illuminating an example of hereditary and environmental religious influences. Professor James speaks of states of mysticism as states purely individual and independent, produced inwardly by pious emotion, unconnected with exterior circumstances. He cites the case of Teresa which, as we see, supports his theory. The modern French school, on the other hand, treating mysticism as disease, might well cite Guibert and Henry Suso in support of theirs. The family of Guibert

(who was born in 1053 and lived until 1124) was steeped in piety, and took mysticism for granted, as other families accept a tendency to asthma. The hysteria of their religious feeling had warped every relation in life; it kept Guibert's parents, sincerely attached to each other, apart for years after their marriage. At eight years old, Guibert was abandoned by his mother, who left him to go into a convent; she had previously disciplined him with blows to conquer the old Adam in him, and so nearly terminated his little life. Yet she was a tender, a devoted mother, whose health suffered from her necessary severity. She is described as a person who in daily life walked close to the borders of the unknown. She dreamed dreams, saw visions, experienced miracles, was frequently transported out of the body. She complained of personal battling with demons, as you and I might complain of dyspepsia. On one occasion, during a physical struggle with the devil, her good angel came to her assistance, "et le renversa, avec un tel fracas que sa chute ébranla violemment la chambre, et reveilla les servantes accablées par le sommeil."

There is no suggestion in her son's account that all this was extraordinary or unusual. No physician came to see Guibert's mother; nobody advised her exhausted family to put her into a rest-cure, nor did any one operate for adenoids. The boy, whom she leaves at this tender age, was intelligent and badly nourished.

Is it remarkable that he should decide at twelve years old to retire also to a monastery, that he might repent "les désordres de la jeunesse"? Visions, voices, despairs follow. His fervor, says Guibert naïvely, "excessively irritated the devil," who had been previously greatly annoyed by his mother's prayers and macerations. The two, mother and son, glorying in the trouble they are giving to the king of evil, keep the excitement at a high pitch by an interchange of letters and messages. With all this, he was a man of delicate literary taste and sound historical method, as is shown by his *Histoire des Croisades*. A poet, too, he yet felt poetry to be an especial snare of the evil one. "Quelquefois je composais des petits écrits où il n'y avait ni sagesse ni retenue, où même ne se trouvait aucun sentiment honnête," he avows sadly, in the naïve phrase preserved from the Latin original by the French translator.

The life of the Blessed Henry Suso, written by himself, deals much less with the personal development of the writer than either Teresa or Guibert. That his mother was pious and his father worldly, that his childhood was joyously devout, so that he never plucked a flower without in spirit offering it to the Blessed Virgin, and that he took the vows at thirteen, is all we are told. There is evidence to show that at the time of Suso's real conversion, five years later, he was merely a youth of exceptional imagination, a tender

heart, and a high and joyous exaltation in religious matters. At the beginning this sense of joyousness is paramount, the visions are beautiful, the dreams serene; he hears the morning stars sing together, and he has a healthy sense of happiness. But the monastic rule and ideals do not encourage joyousness in piety; and Suso soon begins to feel uneasy at his own cheerfulness. He begins then, out of his sincerely religious feeling, to mortify the flesh, to scourge his young body, to torment himself; "and that way madness lies." Twenty years later we find him suffering from "heaviness of spirit," "inordinate fear," "certainty of damnation." "Impious imaginations against the faith," and a hideous delusion of devils, have replaced the singing stars, worshiping flowers, and kind, angelic visitors of his boyish visions. If anything more were wanting to make this change and condition significant, it is Suso's own statement that the wounds and torments of his self-inflicted tortures "had broken down his bodily frame." The narrow border-land between overcharged imagination and unbalanced imagination is traversed under the reader's very eyes.

That this state of mystical excitement was individual, is demonstrable when we compare the experiences of Guibert or Suso with that common-sense record left by Brother Salimbene di Adamo. Healthy in body and mind, this Franciscan friar is converted at twelve years old, during the great Alleluia, and at once takes up a life

of hard, practical, missionary work, as far removed as possible from mysticism. Salimbene's autobiography is purely an objective chronicle; its interest for us lies only in the fact of its displaying the other point of view. The only miracles in Salimbene are the bogus miracles of the friars minor; the only vision is seen by him in a dream, during which the Blessed Virgin lets the young monk hold in his arms the Holy Child. When the vision vanished, Salimbene says: "In my heart remained so great sweetness as tongue could never tell . . . never in this world had I such sweetness as that"; but he does not attempt to suggest that this vision was other than a dream. Salimbene, indeed, is the type of mediæval, personal historian who, though a religious, does not leave a religious confession; in his exposure of the crude, charlatan methods of the preaching friars, his pages are worthy to be laid, as commentary, beside those of a Guibert, Suso, Teresa.

There is much in common between the Abbé Guibert and Cardinal Bellarmin, whose learning made him the wonder of Europe. Bellarmin also had a pious mother, given to fasting and to flagellation, who destined her five sons to the priesthood. Already at five or six years of age the child had preached on Jesus' suffering; and at fifteen this oratorical talent was given its first public exhibition. Bellarmin, however, has the serenity of the savant, and he is not like the Abbé, perpetually concerned about the opinion of Satan. His life, written in

his seventy-second year to oblige a Jesuit friend, is placed in the third person, and, although the life distinctly of a religious, is full of secular detail. His health, which was injured by over-work, his attainments in rhetoric and languages, are dwelt upon, as well as his supernatural adventures and prophecies. Moreover, Bellarmin has the Italian interest in, and observation of, his mental processes; self-study had a fascination for him, for he tells us of a destroyed poem on himself which was composed at sixteen. His mystical attitude, indeed, like that of Teresa, dated definitely from an illness of three years' duration, and was established upon a mental and bodily habit of fundamental sanity.

Bellarmin, although he gives an account of this illness from his nineteenth to his twenty-second year, fails, of course, to connect it with his outburst of piety. In truth, so many of these witnesses furnish us all unconsciously with the means to understand what is veiled and mysterious to themselves. In these just cited, note the clues which are scattered over the page. Rare is the case in which we may not find the *mot d'énigme*. Augustin's life of dissipation and its profound reaction on his mental condition; the solitude and fasting of Patrick; the change in Suso's mysticism; the illness, at so critical an age, of Bellarmin, Teresa, and Madame Guyon; the heredity and surroundings of Guibert — all these are keys for us. Sometimes the causes are still more direct.

That quaint and discreet divine, Robert Blair, has given an account of his conversion, which is one of the most curious and significant in all religious history, and contains as striking an example of "misinterpreted observation" as that halo of Cellini, so ingeniously explained by Symonds. Blair was a little lad of seven when first he was troubled by great thoughts. "Upon a Lord's Day, being left alone in the house through indisposition, the Lord caused my conscience to reflect upon me with this query, 'Wherefore servest thou, unprofitable creature?' I, not being able to answer, looking out the window, saw the sun brightly shining, and a cow with a full udder." Little lonely child, how the picture stirs one! "I went pensively up and down that gallery where I was." After this experience, "I durst never play upon the Lord's Day," he tells us, even when told to do so, for his health's sake, by his kindly schoolmaster. Here are already two significant references to physical conditions; but more is to come. At college this frail and serious boy comes under the spell of Augustin's *Confessions;* but his real conversion occurs when "I met with a most rare and admirable mercy, somewhat of the joy that is unspeakable and glorious." Briefly told, Blair pays a visit to a sick friend, whom he finds compounding a milk-posset with wine. Urged to partake, young Blair does so "heartily," he says, though he was unused to wine. He fell at once into a fever of religious ecstasy and vision, which he never once attributes to

the posset. During this condition, "in the great gladness and exulting of my spirit I extolled my Lord and Saviour, yea, I sang unto him" all night, until "the vehemency of my rejoicing abated." One could wish it in one's heart that all college possets had so innocently uplifting an effect!

Closely examined, the case of Blair bears all the typical features of the mystical phenomenon; it shows the error of isolating these phenomena from the text; it is enough to maintain that the only convincing way to study them is to omit no fact, however trifling, from the whole case. It will be noticed that, in each of the religious excitements already mentioned, facts have been established sufficient to show the starting-point of the disturbance. In each example there was the predisposition of a devout and serious nature, and in each example the mystical phenomena, the ecstasies, visions, voices, begin after a physical strain. So much for five major cases: but how stand the minor?

The Rev. Henry Alline, a Nova Scotian preacher, in 1784, had visions and despairs of unusual vividness. He notes that he spent a solitary and terrified childhood between the fear of Indians and of hell-fire, and that at fourteen a long, severe illness left him indifferent to life. He notes, also, dissipation and extremely late hours. His visions began at nineteen. He is dead, of a "decline," at thirty-six.

Such Quaker autobiographical journals as those of

Alice Hayes, Elizabeth Stirredge, Job Scott, John Woolman, Stephen Crisp, are very full on the question of explanatory physical conditions. Conversely, it is interesting to read that the similar journals of Thomas Ellwood, of Thomas Chalkley, of Richard Davies, and of Samuel Bownas make mention of good and even physical health; and, although they experience strong religious feeling, meditations, exercises, yet, as in the case of Salimbene, *there are no miracles.* The powerful frame and vigorous personality of George Whitefield, undergo, according to his *Short Account,* the most violent religious stress, but his experiences are quite unmystical. Three ardent seventeenth-century Scots, John Livingstone, William Pringle, James Fraser of Brae, observe of themselves that they underwent no special conversion experiences. All three had a normal physical development.

Data in the case of John Crook, John Dunton, and John Bunyan, appear, on the whole, to be pathological. Conversion brought no steady peace to Bunyan's mind; he still underwent tumults and melancholies. Describing one of these moods, when "there fell on me a great cloud of darkness . . . I was so overrun in my soul with a senseless, heartless frame of spirit," Bunyan goes on to say: "At this time also I felt some weakness to seize upon my outward man." There is a similar fullness in the later statement of Blanco White. In the autobiography of Peter Cartwright (which is the only

autobiography from which Professor Starbuck deigns to quote, and which, by the way, is almost wholly an objective narrative), a violent physical crisis precedes conversion, with rush of blood to the head, palpitations and temporary blindness. This attack is the starting-point of Cartwright's whole religious life, and directly responsible for his sense of sin and subsequent struggle and conversion.

Let no one suppose that these instances are quoted here for the mere purpose of repeating that physical causes lie back of religious mania. They are cited, rather, to show how much more the religious confession yields the investigator than he has, so far, been willing to allow; and also how much injustice he may do by isolating single passages. Comparative study of the religious autobiography may lead to certain conclusions, but it must be, necessarily, a study of complete documents. However convinced these mystics are of the divine origin of their experiences, the autobiographical intention, in most cases, urges them to give all the facts; and it is precisely in all the facts that the value lies. Professor James observes that "the religious life exclusively pursued does tend to make the person exceptional and eccentric . . . and to present all sorts of peculiarities which are ordinarily classed as pathological." Joseph Grasset, writing distinctly on the pathological side, thinks it more accurately said that "religious ideas may be the starting point or the manifestation of certain

disturbances." These he groups under two heads: "1, diseased exaggeration of the religious idea; 2, perversion of the religious idea." In neither of these two volumes is any notice taken of those cases where these same mystical phenomena occur wholly unconnected with religion. What does one make of conversions to free-thought, such as William Bell Scott's, which presents the definite and typical features of religious conversion without the belief? A somewhat similar experience was undergone by Annie Besant. Cardan described — with his usual scientific accuracy — a repeated condition of mystical ecstasy in connection with studies in higher mathematics and Greek. A similar experience was Jung Stilling's with regard to the same language. The "burning flashes of energy" which transfixed poor Haydon at his easel, is almost the exact phrase used by Teresa.

Ernest Renan found that sense of uplifted security, that deep, inner peace and radiance, of which Professor James makes so much, only when he left the church and became a confirmed agnostic. Blanco White, after breaking with creed ideas, observes: "In the constant watch I have kept over my imagination, I have observed a sort of reverie — sometimes on important subjects — sometimes on most ridiculous trifles — but always accompanied by a painful degree of abstraction from the senses."

Capel-Lofft says: "Almost all of the active powers of

my mind have come upon me thus suddenly like moments of grace," and gives details.

Chateaubriand, Lamartine, and Sir Egerton Brydges, in describing ecstasies of poetical imagination and composition, use a succession of terms and phrases which might well stand for the diagnosis of a state of religious mysticism.[1]

Apart from all abnormal or extreme ideas, or mystical conditions, the religious attitude of healthy and normal people holds for us the most helpful sides of congeniality and of difference. Since nothing in the world is more important, it is rarely omitted from the sincere personal record. The diversity of view mentioned by Professor James is thus made more apparent. No doubt, in looking here and there among these witnesses of the past, you and I will find light on our special difficulty, on our particular doubt, on our dogmatic certainty. An interchange of views on the subject of religion — where it can be made without heat — is one of the most fruitful interchanges in the intellectual life. Many of us to-day are of that utilitarian cast of mind concerning this topic whereof Franklin was the larger exponent; others hold the whole subject to be a little in the air, as

[1] Prof. Starbuck notices some half-dozen cases in which awakenings bearing the typical features of religious conversion occurred in connection with comparatively trivial causes; such as (1) confessing a fault to a parent, (2) deciding about education, (3) breaking a friendship, (4, 5, 6, 7) sudden ability to sing, play the piano, ride a bicycle, study physics.

did de Retz or Talleyrand: there are still the simply pious, and the fiercely pious, and those whose very souls are dyed, like that of Ernest Renan, in a hue the intelligence has abjured.

As a whole, women appear to be less interested in the subject than men, although they are equally intense as mystics, equally militant as sectarians, and, strange though it may seem, equally serene and powerful as agnostics. Teresa, Madame Guyon, and Harriet Martineau are quintessential of their kind. On the other hand, the great ladies we encounter: Marguerite de Valois, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, her stepmother, Madame Mère du Régent, the two Mancinis, Hortense and Marie, the Princess Daschkaw, Leonora Christina Ulfeldt — these omit more than the conventional references to religion, although they went regularly to church. Mademoiselle de Montpensier had a brief period of yearning toward a convent, but it was very brief. Catherine II says of her own early disposition: "I had no affection; ambition alone sustained me. Generally speaking, I was inclined to devotion." Later, she turns Voltairean, and avows that Tacitus had more influence over her life than any religious sentiment. The Margravine of Bareith has left an autobiography of extraordinary vividness and value. The sordid and hideous pictures which fill her canvas are unsoftened by any lights and shades of real tenderness or of real piety. No daughter of a hod-

carrier had surroundings more brutal, or an existence more dominated by the insane caprices of a drunken father, than this child and sister of kings. If lacking in sentiment or emotion, she is yet a woman of an advanced intelligence in serious matters, approving "ceux qui font une étude de rechercher la vérité," as she puts it. "Je suis même convaincue que les personnes qui s'accoutûment à réfléchir ne peuvent qu'être vertueuses," she maintains, and the conviction has a modern ring.

Certain types of intellectual and moral vigor show small traces of any definite religious influence. Alfieri, whose life is the noble record of struggle and triumph over an unusually violent and unbridled nature, accomplished his ethical advance absolutely without the aid of any religious feeling. A high seriousness takes the place of religion in the lives of Darwin, of John Stuart Mill, of Herbert Spencer; indeed, a high ethical tone, unconnected with any creed idea, is the marked characteristic of this group as a whole. Benjamin Franklin declares himself free from dogma,— "revelation had indeed no weight with me, as such," but he never entirely breaks with the church. His attitude of constant apology for his intellectual independence, is jarring to our modern ideas. To Benvenuto Cellini religion is inseparably bound up with art; and what religious feeling exists is called into play only by beauty. Notwithstanding his immorality and general materialism, these feelings

in him are keen and of high quality. To Goldoni, to Gozzi, in eighteenth-century Italy, the Church is simply an easy convention — there is no trace of religious vitality in their lives. How different from poor Haydon, who dwells upon that "crystal piety of feeling" with deep-breathed prayers, in an intensity of earnestness! Cardan, as we have seen, keeps the religious convention and superstition, while his thought is advanced and free. He feels most religious while at work.

Whatever else she may have concealed, George Sand has presented the most convincing picture of her religious development. Like other imaginative children, she created her own deity, named it *Corambé*, and dedicated to its worship a little grove apart. A most interesting evolution of the religious nature is depicted in these chapters, which for suggestiveness are worth volumes on fetish-worship and demonology.[1] Later in her life, work becomes her religion. Among those whose intellectual serenity never demanded a sacrifice of creed, the good Morellet lived secure, always an abbé, yet conscious, as he says, that "La raison, obscurcie par l'éducation des collèges et des séminaires, reprend bien vite ses droits sur les esprits justes." This type of mind is still more familiar to-day.

[1] George Sand receives corroboration from Edmund Gosse in his recent book, "Father and Son." The boy appears to have lived several years of fetish-worship very similar to George Sand's.

Change in belief is one of the most frequent causes for the autobiography, which thus becomes an *apologia*, in Newman's sense of the word. His *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, and the very curious and suggestive state of mind which it presents, are too well known for further comment. It may, however, be fruitfully compared with a similar document, the *Munquidh min ad-dalal* of Al Ghazzali,[1] which has been translated from the Arabic into French by Barbier de Meynard, under the title *Le Préservatif de l'Erreur*. This serious religious self-examination forms the more strictly autobiographical part of the Arabian's philosophical work, wherein the author, at twenty, sets himself "to discover truth, to separate error, to interrogate each dogma, and to determine heresy." "The search for truth," he maintains, "is the end which I pursue." Al Ghazzali goes through all the torments of religious and intellectual doubt, followed by a prolonged physical and nervous prostration; whence he emerges as a súfi, and ends his days in a mosque. A somewhat similar trend in the life of the Sheikh Ali Hazin has the opposite and significant termination in an intellectual rather than a religious serenity. Ali Hazin says also: "I now felt a desire to inform myself on the questions and truths of different religions, including Christians and Jews." But this investigation simply leads him to freedom from all dogma and to peace of mind.

[1] Recently translated into English.

Similar is the progress of Harriet Martineau toward an uplifted tranquillity. "Christians can never be secure," she maintains; and after receiving sentence of death, she, too, like the Persian sage, "sat, listening for the note of departure."

Not always is the serenity on the side of the free-thinker. We must not forget the case of Uriel d'Acosta, whose successive changes of belief brought him but successive humiliations. Chateaubriand, too, gives many pages to his change of view. His first work, the *Essai*, was sceptic; but the death of his mother, embittered by this fact, causes a revolution, and he starts the *Génie du Christianisme* as an expiatory offering. This shift, therefore, is due primarily to emotion. Another document dealing with an alteration of ideas was written by James Lackington, the London bookseller. An energetic, industrious, self-educated man, Lackington in youth was converted by Wesley to Methodism; retracted in middle-age and became sceptical, only to return more violently than ever in his latter years. Each turn he discusses with conviction. During his lapse from grace he speaks thus of his wife's death: "She died in a fit of enthusiastic rant, surrounded by Methodistical preachers." This unsympathetic attitude he bitterly repents: "I shudder to see what I have done. I have wantonly sported with the most solemn and precious truths!" But he publishes the book, with all these changes, intact.

Changes of faith shown during progress are rare. A curious one is that of Comte Loménie de Brienne, another *mémoiriste*, the son of the upright minister of Henri IV. He is a person vibrating to the extremes of vice and of religion. During his pious moods he composes "des petits cantiques de dévotion sur les aires du monde." No sooner is he a member of a monastic community than he repents the step; and the scandal of his conduct, now priest, now debauchee, caused him first to be exiled, and then placed under restraint. Though he writes his *mémoire* at St. Lazare, where he had lived for eighteen years, it is a singularly well-balanced account of religious caprice; to the end he is said to have retained his memory and "*l'art de raconter.*"

One could wish that Gibbon had given us a fuller account of his conversion to Catholicism, and the rebound to free thought. We know little save that he went to Oxford "with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a school-boy would have been ashamed." A nature throwing itself violently into different creeds is drawn in the *Autobiography of Annie Besant.* Beginning as an orthodox member of the English Church, she swerves toward Romanism and mysticism, reacts into a profound atheism, and drops this after a time for theosophy and Madame Blavatsky. This is, however, more a case of successive personal influences act-

ing on a nature particularly susceptible to personal leadership, and gifted in itself with a talent for becoming a disciple. It is worth noting, because it shows an unusual development in a rather common type of ardent female hero-worshipper.

The well-known modern case of Count Leo Tolstoi shares many of the more striking features of the classical individual confession. Very marked is the Russian's self-depreciation before his conversion; his self-accusations equal in intensity those of Augustin or Bunyan. "Falsehood, theft, voluptuousness of every kind, drunkenness, violence, murder,— there is no crime I have not committed, and yet they count me among the number of men relatively moral!" he exclaims fiercely, in an arraignment less of his faulty self than of what he believed the faulty standards of ethics. This change presents the familiar sequence of emotions: self-disgust, doubt, despair, a total *abattement* of mental and moral activities, and, finally, emergence on the side of simple faith, and a simple plan of existence. But there is an individual quality in Tolstoi's *My Confession* which has a special interest and point for us. Examined more nearly, it is really the record of the immense pressure of the Russian social order upon one over-sensitive soul. The monstrous distortions, the continuous spectacle of injustice in the life about him, could not be borne by this particular individual without producing morbid conditions of spiritual responsibility. We read

every day of similar effects upon equally sensitive persons, although their manifestations in action vary widely. Tolstoi was naturally believing, but the injustice about him killed his faith; for the same reason his scepticism could have nothing but a destructive effect. His religious crisis and his political crisis became one; his religious ideas form a necessary part of his socialistic ideas. This is distinctive in his case; it is not found in similar examples during the richly flowering time of the religious self-study.

Suggestive and interesting accounts of religious development are given in such dissimilar personalities as Dr. Edmund Calamy and Giuseppe Giusti, the Italian poet; by the tragedian William Macready, Mark Pattison, Edgar Quinet, Sir Capel-Lofft. Data showing strong predispositions and definite psychological religious conditions are furnished by Agrippa d'Aubigné, by P. D. Huet, by Georg Brandes, James Freeman Clarke, Samuel Roberts, J. A. Symonds, and others. Rare, indeed, is a volume so unforgettably charming and so authoritative as the *Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse*, in which Ernest Renan describes his peculiar temperament and situation. The whole man — his dreaminess, his indecision, his indulgent tolerance, his scientific virtues, his "*défauts de prêtre*," are conveyed in a rapid and convincing analysis. The perfect optimism of freedom is there; and yet the tenderness for outgrown creeds, which is that of the parent for the

imaginations of a child. Here is no harshness, no scorn for the dreams, the beautiful, impossible visions of the age of faith. He has had "le bonheur de connaître la vertue absolue . . . Au fond je sais que ma vie est toujours gouvernée par une foi que je n'ai plus."

A like note of encouragement is sounded in the *Histoire de mes Idées*, of Edgar Quinet. He also, in striking antithetical phrases, finds his change of view constructive rather than destructive, and the joys of life increased rather than lessened. "Chaque jour," he beautifully writes, "la justice m'a paru plus sainte, la liberté plus belle, la parole plus sacrée, l'art plus réel, la réalité plus artiste, la poésie plus vrai, la vérité plus poétique, la nature plus divine, le divin plus naturel."

This is the type of religious confession which is so helpful to the young and unsure; to that hesitating, seeking mind not yet determined upon a cause. Be it Augustin or Teresa, Renan, Quinet, or Ali Hazin, these are the voices which call to ardent spirits standing at the crucial moment of life.

Enough has been said to show that a comparative study of the religious confession may lead the mind in certain directions, and that if it has led, thus far, in no really significant direction, it is because the work upon it has been so completely *a priori*. Up to the present, the psychologist or neurologist has formulated his theory, and then turned confidingly to some one else's list of cases to select those bearing upon his theory. In

*Les Maladies du Sentiment Religieux*, Murisier observes that religious psychology to-day has failed to make use of autobiography and other material, but has abandoned itself to predication and abstract dissertation, thereby involving a real loss to science; and this still remains the fact. An authoritative and complete work on the religious autobiography, making use of existing material by the inductive method, has yet to be written. It should be one of the world's great books; one of those volumes which speak in a thousand tongues of suggestion to the seeking intellect. Of the value of such a work there exists no corroding doubt; indeed, considering the part played by these records in our mental history, our neglect of them is amazing indeed.

Goethe, in describing the conception of Werther, says: "The whole shot together from all sides, and became a solid mass, just as water in a vessel which stands upon the point of freezing, is converted into hard ice by the most gentle shake." On all sides we find this image repeated in the mental life of the thoughtful and intelligent. Tentative ideas, held in solution, become crystallized at the touch of personal influences and intellectual understanding; and, if asked what most frequently and potently furnishes this touch of guidance, one would reply without hesitation: *The religious confession.*

# CHAPTER XIV

## THE NERVOUS SYSTEMS OF THE PAST

If it seems, in glancing through the more ancient records of personal experience, that we have come to understand much which was strange in the writer's everyday life, what shall we say regarding the dark incidents which touch the supernatural? How many terrifying and inexplicable past occurrences turn toward us now an aspect of familiarity? M. Funck-Brentano's excellent little study on the death of Madame Henriette d'Angleterre is one of the most forcible illustrations to be found of the bright search-light which modern knowledge throws back over the centuries. It is not only for the specialist that the path has been cleared. Bossuet, in the thundering terrors of his funeral sermon, shook the hearts of his auditors with the horror of sudden death: "Madame se meurt — Madame est morte!" he cried, and his description of that swift ending left no accountable cause but deadly poison. Who among us nowadays on hearing that a lady of depleted constitution, anæmic habit, and unhygienic life, with a digestion so impaired that for weeks past she had been living chiefly on ass's milk, had first danced upon the grass, next bathed in a stream, and then, returning,

partaken hastily of an iced drink, — who among us but would think that these proceedings quite accounted for a swift, painful, and mortal illness? The whole troop of ailments for which we are railroaded to the hospitals, to be operated upon and returned, dead or convalescent, to our friends, were invariably ascribed, because of their rapidity of action, to poisonous agencies. Science stands ready to determine the cause of any of these cases, where there chances to have been left a record giving sufficient data. In the same way, much more is to-day understood of those hysterical epidemics which attacked mediæval religious communities, and of the marvels they produced, wherever the contemporary historians have preserved facts and material of unconscious suggestiveness.

Just as it has been shown in the preceding chapter that the religious and mystical vision described in the pious autobiography is usually accompanied by many explanatory facts and unconsciously illuminative circumstances, so we find the supernatural vision, the ghost-story, likewise accompanied. Most frequent here are the cases of "misinterpreted observation," as shown in Cellini and Blair. In the light of such anecdotes and experiences the nervous systems of the past become linked more closely with our own. One is accustomed to think of men and women in 1600 as infinitely less sensitive, as more robust, more stolid; and so in a sense they were. Cruder contacts, more dangers, more vicissi-

tudes, — these tended to toughen the epidermis for self-preservation. To-day a child's illness, an over-gay season, the loss of an investment, a family jar, — these are accepted as sufficient cause for overstrained nerves, and temporary retirement to a sanitarium. Then war, rapine, fire, sword, prolonged and mortal peril, were considered as furnishing no excuse to men or women for altering the habits, or slackening the energies of their daily existence. On the night of St. Bartholomew, a hunted Huguenot rushed into the bedroom of Marguerite de Valois. Her husband's danger was unquestioned, her own exceedingly great. In his mortal agony the man had clutched at her clothes; four archers pursued him into the very *ruelle* where her bed stood. She says she was more frightened than the poor creature himself, and that when M. de Nançay, Captain of the Guard, appeared he could not keep from laughing, —"ne se peust tenir de rire"! The incident hardly strikes us as particularly amusing. Yet, although Marguerite declares she hastened to her sister's room "more dead than alive," she does not omit to tell us, very coolly, how she went out, "changeant de chemise, parcequ'il m'avoit toute couverte de sang"; and it does not appear that she felt that the adventure furnished any excuse to shirk her business on the following morning.

Few modern mothers, who consider one or two healthy children and the conduct of a simple household sufficient warrant to talk of overstrain, but would marvel at

the stoicism of Lady Fanshawe, who writes of her fourteen children, of wandering, penury, privation, the birth and death of baby after baby, the ague, the smallpox, with an apparent philosophic fatalism. But Lady Fanshawe is not always so stolid, and when she sees a ghost she says: "I was so much frightened that my hair stood on end and my night-clothes fell off."

The candor of Robert Blair, which has just been noticed in reference to his religious ecstasy, is of equal service to the reader when it concerns other adventures. At college, Blair tells of his regimen: "I chose to forbear every other day one meal of meat . . . and resolved to watch at my studies every other night." Our modern ideas would consider this a very favorable arrangement for ghost-seeing, nor are we surprised to read: "I have seen a spirit in the likeness of one of my condisciples . . . whom I chased to a corner of the chamber where he seemed to hide himself; but when I offered to pull him out I could find nothing." Blair's strong character placed him above weaker fears; he triumphed over "these apparitions in the night-season, so that I slept very sweetly." Later in life he hears a voice prophesying his wife's death, as he hastened homeward. Blair's experiences are all tinctured with the austerity and beauty of his character, which was genuinely pure and uplifted. The early date of his record almost warrants a certain coarseness, which yet is absent from his nature. It is with full conviction that

we read of his action when he stumbled upon a volume of Petronius. So astonished and disgusted was he, that he impetuously stuffed it into his chamber-fire with the tongs.

Fear — sheer, blind, unreasonable terror — is not by any means the torment of the imaginative and unbalanced only. These records show it to be present as a force in the lives of the most literal and level-headed persons. Those two hard-headed Scots lawyers, Sir John Campbell and Sir Samuel Romilly, both avow a dread of the dark. The first says: "When left alone at the midnight hour I cannot help a feeling of eeriness or superstitious dread coming over me . . . and if the wainscot cracks, the hair of my head writhes up!" while the second says that tales of witches and devils "are sometimes very unwelcome intruders upon my thoughts"; and a greater Scot — Burns — avows the same fears.

Terror of the unknown played a large part in the early lives of those two intellectual women, Harriet Martineau and Sonia Kovalevsky; the former declares that she was afraid of *everything*. The first memory Herbert Spencer had was his fear of solitude. Bussy-Rabutin was mostly afraid of being afraid. Nearer to our own day comes the experience of Lord Brougham, who, being in a warm bath, and very tired, sees the vision of a comrade. The coincidence was startling, since the man died that day; but Lord Brougham does

not hesitate to say that he believes himself to have fallen asleep for an instant unawares; he also adds that, in his opinion, "every seeming miracle is capable of explanation." On the other hand, Alexander Carlyle was cured of his superstitious terrors by the death of an intimate friend who had sworn to reappear to him. His failure to keep the promise rid Carlyle of such terrors forever.

The four volumes of A. J. C. Hare's *Story of My Life*, stripped of description and outside anecdote, present an hereditary and family situation of religious overstrain which one must return to Guibert de Nogent to parallel. The influences surrounding the writer on all sides make for extraordinary superstition, and the visions, the supernatural experiences of the various main characters, deserve a catalogue in themselves. It is a particularly suggestive example of the contagion of religious and supernatural terrors, operating on a modern family instead of a mediæval monastic community.

Among the ghosts of earlier date is one of his dead mother seen by Agrippa d'Aubigné at six and a half years old. Again we are not surprised, for we are told that at this age he could read Latin, Greek, French, and Hebrew, while a year later he translated the *Crito*, which was published with a frontispiece of his "*effigie enfantine.*" The recurrent childish phantoms seen by Jerome Cardan, — the red cock, the transparent figures rising from the carpet, — are due to a plain case of

early nervous strain. A very different person, the Englishman Samuel Roberts, had pretty nearly the same dreams and visions. The modern cases of night-terrors in Leigh Hunt, Anne Gilbert, Frederick Locker-Lampson, J. Addington Symonds, and Edmund Gosse, are similar, both as to effect and cause. In Heine's childish dreams he always figured as his own great-uncle, whom he much admired; these dreams seemed as vivid as visions.

The salamander seen by Benvenuto Cellini was, he declares, impressed upon his mind by his father's beating; his age at the time, three years, renders this testimony dubious. But Cellini had no doubt whatever concerning the devils he saw in the Coliseum. No more had the astrologer William Lilly about his conversation with Queen Mab; he describes her appearance and manner minutely.

In his *Confession*, Patrick describes how once "Satan fell on me like a huge rock, and I had no power in my limbs . . . it came to my mind that I should call out '*Helias!*' and in that moment I saw the sun rise in the heaven, and while I was crying out '*Helias!*' with all my might, behold, the splendor of that sun fell upon me, and at once removed the weight from me." This is a remarkably interesting and picturesque experience, inasmuch as the only facts contained in it are those of a weight on Patrick's limbs which was dissipated by a sight of the rising sun. The mystical and

religious connotation lies all in his mind; and the word he used as an invocation was entirely applicable, not like the stuff with which Jerome Cardan's tutelary genius used to perplex him in dreams. "Te sin casa," the first phrase said to Cardan, was neither good Latin nor good Italian, and the second phrase, "Stephanus Dames," was sheer gibberish. But the use of verbal invocation by Patrick is very significant, showing that, though a Christian, he had not traveled far from the barbarous magic of the native British creeds.

The Mogul Emperor, Timur the Great, is assured of his future success by visions and voices. Praying in his tent, he is told by an unseen voice: "Timur, victory and conquest are thine." "Convinced it was an angel," he comments, "I felt strong of heart." This incident was not classified with those mystical phenomena in the last chapter which are unconnected with religion, because, superficially at least, it appears to have a religious cause. Examined in the light of Timur's whole book, it will be readily granted as not properly a religious experience at all. Timur's religious feeling is cold and conventional; he is no more of a fanatic than Napoleon. Like Napoleon, however, he has a high fatalism, a fanatic belief in his star. His autobiography is an intellectual document, permeated with a sense of the divine right of kings, which increases his self-importance and gives him solemnity. Timur is careful to state his faults, or what appear to him as such; he tells

of vanity and pride, and of good moral resolutions to overcome them. In a serious mood he writes: "I left off playing chess; adhered to the law, and followed the dictates of religion; resolved not to injure any creature," and is deeply regretful that he had stepped on an ant. Strange sensitiveness in one of the bloodiest of conquerors! That susceptibility to warnings from the other world often goes hand-in-hand with practical ability, with warlike courage and daring, is shown in other cases than Timur. Flavius Josephus notes three separate divine warnings received by him in dreams. Blaise de Monluc, that ruthless fighter, wept copiously at the evil presage of a dream; although this may be but an instance of what Dr. Calamy calls Monluc's "rhodomontading around!"

Strong-minded persons, men and women of intellect, share the prevalent superstitions: credulity, as has been noted in the case of Jerome Cardan, is more a question of temperament than of intellect. The pros and cons of the great mathematician's supernatural beliefs have already been discussed. Even Herbert of Cherbury, that clear intelligence, asked for a sign from Heaven as to publishing his book: "One fair day in summer, my casement being opened toward the south, the sun shining clear and no wind stirring . . . a loud, yet gentle noise came from the heavens (for it was like nothing on earth) and did . . . comfort and cheer me." He protests that he is not superstitious, and proceeds

— very like Cardan again — to give his circumstantial reasons for believing the occurrence to be supernatural. "A loud yet gentle voice," is Herbert's description of angelic warning. To Cardan his demon spoke always in a murmur, which "in disputation or argument became a roar of voices." Low, insinuating whispers of doubt affect Teresa and Madame Guyon. An authoritative, commanding voice from heaven leads Augustin, Henry Alline, and Fox to a change of thought. Elizabeth Ashbridge, an English Quaker, writes: "I thought myself sitting by a fire in company with several others, when there arose a thunder-gust; and a noise, loud as from a mighty trumpet, pierced my ears with these words, 'Oh eternity! eternity! the endless term of long eternity!'" With John Crook the voice cries: "'Fear not, oh thou tossed!' Whereupon all was hushed and quieted within me."

So much for auditory phenomena; the visual also have much in common. Alline writes : "I was alone and pondering on my lost condition when all on a sudden I was surrounded by an uncommon light, like a blaze of fire," and, later, "I thought I saw a small body of light as plain as possible before me." Alline lived only till his thirty-sixth year, and his newly acquired mental peace is followed, almost at once, by the physical symptoms which finally killed him. Suso's visions, in the beginning, are that kind of gracious and lively imaginings of heaven and angels which are common to many

young souls; they progress steadily toward definite hallucination.

Toward the end of Haydon's life we find the gradual approach of mental disease noted in his autobiography with rare fidelity and accuracy. In the beginning were night-horrors, recurrent nightmares, fits of frantic energy alternating with listless collapse. Later on, his eyes and digestion are affected; and his moods preoccupy him to a morbid extent. Then comes a time when he begins to hear "a sort of audible whisper," and to see "a creeping light," — one shuts the book with a shudder, premonitory of darkness and the razor. But in the light of such efforts as the recent attempt of Mr. Clifford W. Beers to describe, analyze, and estimate his own condition during an acute attack of melancholia and suicidal mania, Haydon's case deserves a closer attention than it has heretofore received.

The memoirs of the mentally or nervously unbalanced lead us, by natural steps, to the broader question of human unhappiness and its cause. We are not stinted as to documentary evidence, as is pointed out by Mr. Ribot: "Quand on traite de la douleur on est embarrassé par l'abondance des documents et la difficulté d'être court; pour le plaisir c'est le contraire." Already the reader has had occasion to agree with this generalization, and to be grateful for M. Ribot's clearness of definition and distinction. "La chagrin," he so aptly says, "est liée à des purs concepts ou à des représenta-

tions idéales. C'est la douleur intellectuelle, bien plus rare, et qui d'ordinaire n'afflige pas, du moins longtemps, le commun des hommes. Telle est la douleur de l'homme religieux qui ne se sent pas assez fervent, du métaphysicien tourmenté par le doute, le poète et l'artiste, qui poursuit sans succès la solution d'un problème." Names occur to the mind at once as examples of these intellectual sorrows. Every religious confession gives token of the first; John Stuart Mill, Al Ghazzali, Maimon, devote pages to analyzing the second; and among the poets and artists we may name Alfieri, Leigh Hunt, Cellini, Haydon. Religion, particularly on the side of fear, has been the great influence for sorrow in the life of intelligent man. Both because of persecution, and the practical difficulties which it threw across the pathways of humanity's mental progress; and because of its inward darkening effect upon the spirits through fear, it is present as the most frequent cause for the unhappiness of the thinking creature.

The *Exemplar vitæ humanæ* of Uriel d'Acosta has already been mentioned among the religious confessions dealing with changes of faith; it contains certain sentences which deserve quotation in this connection. "By religion," declares Acosta, with bitterness, "has my life been made a scene of incredible sufferings. I was educated, according to the custom of that country, in the Popish religion; and when I was

but a young man, the dread of eternal damnation made me desire to keep all its doctrines with the utmost exactness. I employed my leisure time in reading the Gospel . . . but difficulties rose before me; which by degrees threw me into such inextricable perplexities and doubts as overwhelmed me with grief and melancholy. . . . I began when I was about twenty years old to question with myself whether or no it was not possible for these things which were related of another life to be forgeries, forasmuch as my reason did perpetually suggest to me things that were directly contrary."

Rarely in literature has the gist of religious unhappiness been presented in a paragraph more condensed and poignant than this. If the remainder of Acosta's tract is but a denunciation, this beginning is *exemplar vitæ humanæ*, indeed. Unfortunately, Acosta seems to have lacked the iron fibre of the martyr for his successive opinions. First Catholic, then Jew, then apostate and again Jew, he suffered all the humiliations which the bigotry of men could inflict, and all the bitterness of persecution, both temporal and spiritual. No wretchedness was spared him; not even a sense of failure, nor attempt at murderous revenge, nor suicide at the end.

The other strongly differentiated intellectual miseries, as observed by M. Ribot, may be found to a greater or less degree in many autobiographers. Such is the

person with a grievance, a strongly marked type, presenting features which deserve a closer study than psychologists have, up to the present, accorded him.

The famous *tragédienne*, Mademoiselle Sophie Clairon, is one of them, and Marie Mancini, Princess Colonna, another. Cabals at the Comédie-Française permanently soured the life of the former; her failure to marry Louis XIV, that of the latter. Even before poor Haydon's mental disease began to show itself, he is embittered by the public's lack of recognition. The spirited *mémoire* of Hector Berlioz, the musical composer, traces the progress of a grievance throughout a life, rolling up matter like the proverbial snowball, till it is best expressed in his final sentence: "Je suis dans ma 61$^{e}$ année; je n'ai plus ni espoirs, ni illusions, ni de vastes pensées; mon fils est presque toujours loin de moi; je suis seul; mon mépris pour l'imbécillité et l'improbité des hommes, ma haine pour leur atroce ferocité, sont à leur comble."

This denunciation reminds one of the unhappy poet, Sir Egerton Brydges, whose failure to impress his peculiar, exclusive and aristocratic views upon a broadening and progressive society, turned his hypersensitiveness to gall. "No one has met with more dampers through life than I have. From my very childhood every sort of chill was thrown in my way"; and he goes on to say: "My fears, my presages, my indignations, my regrets, hang like barbed arrows in my brain!" His

belief is that "a poetical temperament is of all others the least fitted to the world."

The Maréchal de Bassompierre ends his gay *insouciant* account upon much the same note of querulous complaint. But perhaps the very wretchedest, and surely one of the most instructive cases, is the unfortunate Joseph Blanco White. Morbid sensitiveness and religious uncertainty led to bad health a constitution never robust; and plunged him into a pit of utter misery. White's situation is almost exactly the same as that out of which Ernest Renan raises himself to tolerance, indulgence, and serenity. No sermon ever preached on moral health could do more good than a close comparative study of these two documents. Like Renan, Blanco White was bred to Catholicism, which he later renounces; like Renan, he retains the priestly temperament, the clerical attitude. It is true the Frenchman speaks of his own indecision, yet one feels his vitality, his initiative force — a force which enables him to face, to lift, and to dispose of a weight of doubt which bent the weaker man to the earth.

Two varieties of the unhappy autobiography thus exist for us — the weak and the strong. No more unhappy life was ever written than that of Mrs. Oliphant; it ceases upon a note of passionate grief which wrings the heart; yet never was an account more inspiring or invigorating. "This fat, little, commonplace woman, rather tongue-tied," says: "I have been tempted to begin writing by

George Eliot's life, with that curious sort of self-compassion which one cannot get clear of. I wonder if I am a little envious of her. . . . I am in very little danger of having my life written!" The record, as we read it, makes us feel that here at least is a note George Eliot never knew, for the larger part of her life was sheltered from such poignancies. It is the average, everyday woman's experiences this woman writes of, and so courageously! All the strong and delicate candor of it; her struggle with common cares and burdens; the life, never free from drudgery; the marriage, not altogether happy; the sons, not altogether satisfactory — all the *pulvis et umbra*. Who can forget what she says of her early married life? "Had I gone alone with my husband — some unhappiness might have been spared;" and adds, characteristically: "Who can tell? There would have been other unhappiness to take its place." Then, after a long illness, her husband dies in Italy — "quite conscious," she writes, wondering at, and almost resenting, the indifference of the dying; "kissing me when his lips were already cold; and quite, quite free from anxiety; though he left me with two helpless children, and one unborn, and no friends but the ——s."

She is able to the end of her life to support her own family and that of a brother by her pen; and it is in her attitude toward this fact and its influence that she is especially suggestive. Work was easier to her than

economy; and she is willing, like Cardan, to shoulder the responsibility of this attitude for the weakening effect upon the character of her sons. But, alas! save to her mother-pride, it all mattered so little! for in the last pages she speaks, like Calantha, only

> "Of death! and death! and death! Yet I danced forward,
> Though it struck home, and here, and on the instant."

Then she sounds the note of intensity which she never struck in her novels, and which gives her autobiography a place where she need not be afraid of George Eliot, nor of anyone else. Brave misery, gallant sorrow, they are perhaps the most salutary reading in the world. Mrs. Oliphant, the Italian poet Giuseppe Giusti, Madame de Staal-Delaunay, Harriet Martineau, Jerome Cardan, — are not their narratives worth a hundred triumphant surveys of power and prosperity?

At what point the load of human misery becomes too heavy for human shoulders, has been greatly speculated upon from early times until the present. Records of the coroner's office furnish material for exhaustive surveys like Enrico Morselli's,[1] which treat of sex and nationality, and of the social and psychological influences at work. Personal narratives can enlighten the subject but little, since the wish expressed in them to end the whole business of living is necessarily unfulfilled. They do, however, furnish suggestions as to the

[1] "Suicide."

sorts of unhappiness which serve to produce the suicidal impulse, and to its extent and its physical and nervous reactions when produced.

Jerome Cardan, writing of his own boyhood, makes the remark: "There were times when I did not lack heroic passion, so that I have contemplated suicide; but as I suspect this same thought to have occurred to others, I shall not dwell on it further in this book." It will scarcely be believed that this shrewd and accurate observation was singled out by contemporaries as a triumphant proof of the author's lunacy! Even so late as 1854, Mr. Morley, Cardan's biographer, is quite horrified by it, and hastens to assure us that he believes the idea of self-destruction improbable, if not impossible, to *youth*. To *healthy* youth he might have said; but Cardan presses the abnormal conditions of his boyhood upon one's attention, and makes the remark with his usual due appreciation of *all* the facts. Modern scientific observers bear him out in this, as in so many other points of personal psychology. Dr. G. Stanley Hall,[1] studying the problem of youthful suicide, quite does away with Mr. Morley's ingenuous conventions about the joyousness of youth. The epoch of disillusion, Dr. Hall shows, combines with the age of emotion to produce acute conditions of wretchedness, from which self-destruction seems the only issue. Truly, as William Bell Scott puts it: "Childhood has the

[1] "Adolescence," vol. ii.

credit of being a garden of Eden; but it is rather an enchanted island, full of strange noises, and haunted by a Caliban."

Certain cases and causes are worth examination. Vittorio Alfieri, a child of eight, devoured the rank herbs of the court-yard in a vain endeavor to make an end. The reason appears to be home neglect, and a lack of home affection toward a child morbidly emotional and demonstrative. Cardan's own reason was his ambition, chafed by servitude and poverty, and embittered by base birth. John Stuart Mill, at twenty-one, falls into a nervous reaction from his strained and one-sided education, which makes him morbidly conscious of his difference from other lads of the same age. During this depression he sees "no reason why I should go on living," and contemplates throwing down the heavy burden. Religious doubts and perplexities, of course, most frequently give rise to this impulse. J. Addington Symonds, whose fragmentary autobiography is interesting largely because of his great love for these records, connects his own wish to kill himself with religious doubt and ill-health. John Bunyan and John Crook both longed for death; in Crook's case, he was afraid to have a knife in the room.

Tolstoi, in his *Confession*, declares that during his long and intense religious struggle he was not at all ill when he wished to take his own life. "On the contrary," he writes, "I rejoiced in a moral and

physical force which I have rarely met with among people of my age." To him suicide was a method to be employed by strong and logical men. At sixteen, Chateaubriand tried to shoot himself, but the musket missed fire. The clouds of sentimentality hang very thick over the *Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*, and it is hard to accept in explanation of this act that invention of an imaginary lady-love, which the youthful Chateaubriand took far too seriously.

An unusual reason for self-destruction is given by that intrepid friend of Catherine II of Russia, the Princess Daschkaw. Her son's misbehavior, culminating in a *mésalliance*, humiliated her to such a point that she seriously contemplated her own death.

Much more easily comprehensible is poor little Harriet Martineau, at eight years old, deaf, and ailing, and full of terrors, who goes into the kitchen to get a carving-knife to cut her throat, but fails to find one. "The impulse dwindled," she writes, "into the desire of running away." George Sand rather closely analyzes her own suicidal impulse; she believes it to be hereditary and pathological, but immediately the result of religious doubt. "Si vive, si subtile, si bizarre," she calls it, "une espèce de folie." A narrow escape from drowning, due, at least partially, to this impulse, shocks her into a cure.

That singular figure, Solomon Maimon, in one of his perpetual drinking bouts, decides upon drowning, and gets into the water as far as his waist, when the cold

rouses him. He does not take the incident in the least seriously, however, but speaks of it as a "serio-comic scene."

Allusions to suicide become more and more frequent with Haydon as the impulse increases. His is one case where we may watch it grow to the point of actual accomplishment. Nor should it be forgotten that Haydon fed on morbid horrors even before his mind became affected. We find him — a most affectionate and devoted father, by the way — sitting by his dying child to sketch "that look of tragic power in dearest Georgy's convulsion fits!"

Haydon carries out his intention; others, as we have seen, chance intervened to save. Among these is Edgar Quinet, whom an unhappy love-affair had driven to this extreme. Loading his gun, he places the end of the barrel in his mouth, and runs some distance through the thick wood. But fate spares him, and he accepts the verdict.

The fourteen examples above cited give certain evidence as to the age of the suicidal impulse. This has, of course, been studied by Morselli and others from the larger outlook furnished by official statistics, which these cases but confirm. Alfieri and Harriet Martineau were children of eight; Cardan, Quinet, Chateaubriand, John Stuart Mill, Symonds, Crook, and Tolstoi, experienced it between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three; the Princess Daschkaw was older, and so were Maimon and Haydon, but in the last two cases insanity and

drink furnish definite cause. Bunyan gives no details as to age or circumstance.

The connection between so-called supernatural phenomena and other symptoms of a depressed nervous system, such as a desire of self-destruction, may not, at first sight, appear to be close; yet on the broader lines of subjective human experience it is not without value to glance at them together. Our depressions, our morbid moods, are better understood to-day; but we see they are not peculiar to one age nor to one race. It is true, as M. Ribot tells us, that one is embarrassed by the number of documents which treat of human suffering; while, as for happiness, it has no history. Exercise of the artistic and intellectual faculties, which will be treated later, is a thing apart; but as to misery, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together," and a comparison of the causes and forms of mental suffering, whether religious or natural or obscure, cannot but be fruitful and helpful to such of us who may feel that in these trials we stand alone.

# CHAPTER XV

## THE RELATIONS OF THE SEXES

ALTHOUGH the study of autobiography repays us most richly where it is most personal, yet there is a sense in which we gain most by detaching ourselves from the examination of particular cases, in order to try for some generality, and then to see what comment these cases make upon our thought. General attitudes, rather than special information, become interesting to seek, since in the general attitudes of our ancestors lie buried our own concrete likes and dislikes, prejudices and convictions. "The dead," declares Le Bon, "are the only undisputed masters of the living." Bearing this in mind, and ridding oneself of the current misconceptions on the whole subject, we may gather much from study of the mutual attitudes of men and women.

For if there be one subject upon which the autobiographer is likely to write fully, it is the sex-relation. Second only to his religious feeling, the part this sentiment plays in his life becomes the most important of all its influences. No one writing with a serious intention of self-study omits to treat of it. True, he may, like George Sand or Goethe, allow himself to be governed in the writing by literary convention and sentiment, rather than by the truth; or, contrariwise, like

Rousseau, he may permit this one topic to assume a disproportionate relation. But he always gives it place. Even David Hume, in the nine-page autobiographical fragment bearing his name, is careful to make room for the statement: "I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women"; and also here Heine must have a laugh at himself: "I still love women: when I was cut off from all female society at Göttingen," he says, "I got a cat!"

If this be so with a writer, it follows that the reader may be sure of one thing in any full and candid document: *that the proportion which this subject bears to a person's self-delineation, it has borne to his mind and life.*

In partial cases, in lives of which the *Dichtung und Wahrheit* and the *Histoire de ma Vie* are typical examples, where the sex-life of the subject is veiled or wholly omitted, the reader may at least safely bear in mind that *the writer's prevailing attitude toward sex-questions on paper, has been his attitude toward these questions in life.* If this be true, then, there is much illumination to be gained from any sincere self-presentation, however slight or partial.

The two ideas above emphasized cannot be too strongly insisted upon, from the reader's point of view. The act of literary composition may distort or exaggerate a feeling; it does not create the accent, the emphasis, the quality of that feeling. However wild Goethe's assertions about platonic love may seem to us,

yet, unquestionably, the sentimentality which caused him to make them, underlay and colored all of his relations with women. As an old man, he gives us only the enduring residue of a sentiment which had governed him in his exciting and excited youth. He has forgotten the rest. Where the line between the intellectual-nature and the sex-nature has been defined and sharp in life, then it is equally defined and sharp in the personal narrative. So it is seen in George Sand, in Catherine II of Russia, in Vittorio Alfieri. Nature is betrayed by the autobiographer's voice, and accent, and emphasis; he cannot hide, disguise, or omit it. If he is healthy, normal, idealistic, it shows; if he is perverted, cynical, disproportioned, morbid, vicious, it will out. In slight acts, little reflections, trifling habits of mind, nature seizes hold of his pen, and writes what he is, large and clear.

When Monluc declares of love that "celà est du tout contraire à un bon cœur"; describes how he wore a lady's colors: "Je portois gris et blanc pour l'amour d'une dame, de qui j'estois serviteur lorsque j'avois le loisir"; it is reasonable to infer that women meant comparatively little to him. When Catherine II remarks of her love-affairs: "I was a true gentleman," we feel it must be as true as that she was no lady; she is able somehow to assume a masculine responsibility toward the subject, and it is a different responsibility. Neither Catherine's intellect nor her sovereignty was influenced

by her successive lovers; she preserved that side of life apart from her work, as a man does. Her predecessor, the Empress Elizabeth, will never be anything in the eyes of the world but a royal courtezan; whereas the masculine vigor, the masculine aloofness of Catherine, serve, at least, to place her in another category.

That honest and jolly Madame Mère du Régent presents the attitude of the reasonable wife desiring to make friends with a husband who does not love her. Like Catherine, like Marguerite de Valois, she decides to be the confidante and the good comrade of this stranger, to whom, through no will of either, she is linked. The other two ladies, being persons of temperament, found the business unremunerative and *ennuyeux*: they therefore, after a while, by murder and divorce freed themselves from the task. But the outspoken Madame is not of their type. She worked thirty years to gain her lord's esteem and confidence, and then — she tells it with real bitterness — he had to go and die! Her judgment of the Duc d'Orléans' character, her analysis of his weaknesses, is capitally impersonal; yet it lacks the biting touch which causes Hortense Mancini, Duchess de Mazarin, to describe her husband. "Jamais personne n'eut les manières si douces en public, et si rudes dans le domestique," says Hortense, angrily; and the charge is not uncommon. Most illuminating and humorous is this last lady's extreme boredom with the sentimental *emportements* of her sister Marie. Being of a

cooler disposition herself, she tells us, almost with a shrug, how Marie expected her to be in love all the time, and what a bore Hortense found it. In this she is like the Electress Sophia of Hanover, who found Italian society insupportable, because "nothing is thought of but love." Sophia endures with dignity and patience a jealous and boorish husband, for whom she seems to have felt sincere affection. When the marriage is proposed, she candidly avows, "a good establishment was all I cared for," and of the suitor she says: "I, being resolved to love him, was delighted to find how amiable he was." Yet, notwithstanding his rude and wearisome jealousies, her marriage was not, on the whole, unhappy. Despite the irony of Wilhelmine of Bareith, she treats tenderly of her husband and of their marriage; whereas she rarely mentions her daughter, and then with coldness.

Here are extracts enough to show how inevitably the writer's attitude will come to the surface, willy-nilly. It is interesting that they are all women, because women are far more reticent as to the sex-life than are men. There are absolute reasons for this, no doubt; the whole business is more important to the woman. Frankness like Madame's as to her marital arrangements, or that of Marguerite de Valois about her husband's mistress, *la* Fosseuse, or of both Mancinis, and the Electress Sophia, is not usual. An English actress, Ellen Terry, in her recent *Story of My Life*, alludes to "my love of being in love," and to what she terms

other "bourgeois qualities," such as "the love of a home and the dislike of solitude." This confession comes upon one almost with a shock, although women in general acknowledge the truth of these sentiments. The famous Mademoiselle Georges, indeed, gives the intimate details of her *liaison* with Napoleon, in a manner and with details of a startling candor; while, on the other hand, a contemporary French actress, Sarah Bernhardt, amazingly full in details of family life, childhood, education, ideas, etc., cuts the whole subject, in what may be best described as a pointed manner. Marie Bashkirtsev is often cited as an example of candor, but the love she minutely describes is one she felt at twelve years old for a man she never met; as she grows into a woman she becomes reserved. Perhaps the rarest admission of all is Miss Cobbe's: "No man has ever desired to share it [her life], nor has she seen the man she would have wished to ask her to do so." The entire question of the relation which the sex-life bears to the intellectual life of men and women respectively, is indeed obscure; and if the jottings in this section serve no other purpose, they may at least serve as a gathering of material for some future handling of the topic.

Just as the Italian cases are found to be most representative in their expression, along the line of human experience in general, so we find their pages holding the most salient and typical pictures of affection and pas-

sion. Again, one must insist on the immense value of the Italian ability to distinguish between passion and lesser degrees of feeling. Few as are the Italian subjective autobiographies, their quality in this regard lends them the highest value, and gives their data immense importance to the student. Each single figure stands luminously forth, a type of human temperament. Let us say what we will as to the advisability of observing individualities as types, of yielding perhaps too readily to the temptation of so defining them, yet when such a type is found, it becomes at once more suggestive and more human. When I see in a friend certain Cellini or Goldoni characteristics, I understand much that would seem otherwise perplexing in his nature.

The artistic sensualist to-day, no doubt, is less highly-colored than was Cellini, for nature to-day uses no such brilliant palette as she did in the Renaissance; yet one recognizes as wholly familiar the fact that Cellini's only idealism on the subject of woman is part of his love of art and his worship of beauty. More appealing to our modern ideals of character evolution is Vittorio Alfieri's life of himself. Alfieri's autobiography might be taken as a text-book of how *not* to treat a child. In every single instance one would act differently to-day. At school he says he was "asino fra asini e sotto un asino."[1] He had bad food, bad influences, bad discipline. The book paints in touches of minute fidelity a young boor,

[1] Ass among asses and under an ass.

violent, morbid, vicious, and illiterate, turning gradually toward self-education and development. In the earlier portions Alfieri describes a lack of self-control amounting almost to madness; he lives, in fact, what he terms "una vita vero bruto bestia,"[1] adding that he blindly obeyed his own nature, — "ubbedendo ciecamenta alla natura mia." His temper was so violent that he nearly killed a faithful valet for accidentally pulling his hair. He was badly educated, untrained, idle, and fond of horses and low companions; but through it all he was a strong man. To cure himself of an unworthy infatuation he bound himself to a chair with ropes, and remained there, sobbing and cursing, until past this "access of furious imbecility."[2]

When Alfieri met the Countess of Albany he had already begun to try and free himself from the violences of his nature. He heads this portion of the *Vita*, *Real Liberation: the First Sonnet*, but it is his love which opens the true springs of poetry. Exceedingly susceptible to woman's influence as he was, it is an honor to this woman that she exerted hers wholly to encourage him in study and the creative life. What he had of natural genius was little compared to his splendid capacity for self-development. Eccentric and original he remained always, but from this moment he turned all the impetuous fervor of his disposition into

[1] The life of a truly brute beast.
[2] Quel accesso di furiosa imbecillità.

work and study. He rode over literature as he had ridden in the Roman streets; his education was made up in leaps and bounds; his passion for creative work, and for the lady, appear to have equally increased. The terms which he uses to describe her and her influence, even Mill has not surpassed. His love was, indeed, "impetuous and fervent, but not the less profound and felt and lasting." In her biography of Louise of Albany, Vernon Lee attests the truth of Alfieri's self-portraiture, — his "numb, morbid boyhood, the attempt at child suicide," — and suggests (with justice) some probable nervous condition, later outgrown. This author remarks on the unattractiveness (to everyone else) of the Countess of Albany. Their relation had all the sincerity, the mutual inspiration, of marriage in its highest form. No modern ideal partnership of taste and aims seems ever to have been more completely realized.

The comparison of Mill comes readily to the mind, but it is a comparison rather of results achieved than of likeness in kind. In the case of Alfieri, intellectual stimulus was what he most needed to make him a healthy and sane creature, and this Louise of Albany gave; in the case of John Stuart Mill, it was an emotional stimulus which he most needed to make him a sane and healthy creature, and this Mrs. Taylor gave. Undoubtedly the world would have been greatly the poorer had these two women been of a lower type —

the type, let us say, of Frau von Stein. The tragic limitations of Mill's education had bred in him an intense idealism, which disillusion must have turned to bitterness. Every one of Mill's readers knows the words in which he draws the heights of his wife's character, and of their friendship in marriage. It amuses the Carlyles and other omniscient acquaintances to laugh at this, to suggest that Mrs. Mill profited by her husband's inexperience of women. Another view suggests that it might be a harder task to deceive as to her intellectual qualities a man of Mill's attainments and standards, than if he had been more a man of the world. In any case, there is drawn an ideal relation between a man and a woman by John Stuart Mill, by Vittorio Alfieri, and, in a slighter case, by Giovanni Dupré, which may truly serve to reanimate the faint-hearted idealist.

Men's notion of what woman's superiority consists in is, in truth, variable enough. The historian Agrippa d'Aubigné deeply wept his young wife's loss, yet all he can tell us of her virtue is the one anecdote that he sent her a sealed box "avec defense de l'ouvrir, ce qu'elle observa contre l'ordinaire de son sexe." Evidently Eve, Pandora, and Fatima stood for the typical woman during this era also!

What we term the expediency view of marriage is as frequent in the personal narrative as the idealistic is rare. Often, also, it is carried to an extreme which shocks our modern feeling of romance. The German

scholar, Thomas Platter, thus describes the important event: "My cousin and his wife recommended me to marry their housekeeper, Anne . . . and [said] they would make us their heirs. I allowed myself to be persuaded and celebrated the wedding." This simplicity is surpassed only by Thomas Bewick, the English engraver, who says of his future wife: "Though her character was innocence itself, she was mentally one of the weakest of her sex." This admirable qualification made Bewick the more determined, and he records the marriage as a success. The husband chosen for Mademoiselle Delaunay, the Baron de Staal, is depicted in terms no less candid, one of her first requisites being that he should keep a sufficient table; but we know that this match was a *pis aller*, and that Mademoiselle Delaunay had already passed through her little romance with M. de Silly. She treats of this with her own inimitably light touch and with a smiling cynicism, yet there was a wound of which she cannot conceal the scar. Then there are wounds which leave no scar. Kotzebue, though frantic at the loss of his wife, forgets to tell the reader that he married again. Dr. Edgeworth weds one sister at the request of another; and Jung Stilling's dying second wife urges him to take her friend, Eliza, for his third; which he does. Madame Roland's marriage of respect she declares to have been happy; and she believes that the intellect should always guide one's

choice; there are traces, however, throughout her life, of imperfect emotional development. George Fox lifted the question of matrimony into the realm of direct religious inspiration, taking, as it were, his orders from the Deity, in these words: . . . "I had seen from the Lord a considerable time before, that I should take Margaret Fell to be my wife; and when I first mentioned it to her she felt the answer of life from God thereunto . . . It opened upon me from the Lord that the thing should be accomplished." A quaintly self-deceitful account is given by "that ancient servant of Christ," Stephen Crisp, of his second marriage, to which he first alludes in merely general terms: "I received an opening in the Truth that the Lord would give me another wife"; but a little further on there is a pious mention of "my dear friend, whom I had seen would be given to me to wife" — thus showing that the affair was not quite so impersonal to Crisp as he would have us think. All happy and successful Quaker marriages are dwelt on much in these terms; those which did not turn out so well are mentioned as "snares," or as "chastisement from the Lord's hand."

So completely a pious matter is the marriage of John Livingstone, Robert Blair's friend, that he thus treats of it: "It was above one month after, before I got marriage affection to her, although she was for personal enduements beyond many of her equals.

I got it not till I obtained it by prayer; but thereafter I had greater difficulty to moderate it."

In certain cases of religious conversion, the very happiness of the tie is used as an awful example of the low spiritual state of the subject. Jane Pearson, Friend, cannot forgive herself for being happily married at twenty-one. "United to a choice husband, I swimmed in an ocean of pleasure!" she exclaims, in horror at her lost condition. Tolstoi's marriage turns him temporarily from the dark paths of religious despair, though it cannot keep him away. Dr. Edmund Calamy thus states his reasons for the step: "The lady had universally a good character, was a member of ——— congregation, of a singular good temper, and one of my mother's own recommending." The requirements of Bishop Newton, the famous Dean of St. Paul's (about 1750), run to a formidable catalogue, for the lady must have some "knowledge and experience of the world, be clever, sensible and a prudent manager and economist," one who could "lay out his money to the best advantage . . . supply his table handsomely, yet not expensively, and do the honors of it in a becoming manner." She must be also a tender nurse, and not be "perpetually gadding abroad"! Fortunately for Dr. Newton, he had known this paragon from a "little child in a white frock"; and he is careful to print what others thought as to her extreme suitability. But his ideas had surely become enlarged, since his first wife is simply

described as "an unaffected, modest, decent young woman"! That singular philosopher Solomon Maimon, married at eleven, and was a father before he was fourteen. That his marriage ended in divorce does not surprise us after reading the account of his habits and personality. He asserts that his wife was a "woman of rude education and manners, but of good sense and courage." The only reason given us by Flavius Josephus for divorcing his first wife, is that he was not much pleased with her behavior; of his second choice he speaks in high terms. The attitude of Madame d'Épinay toward her husband, and of Jean Jacques Rousseau toward his Thérèse, are simply that of their age and society; they present few distinctive features. The same is true of their love-affairs. One may get much amusement by reading of Émilie's sentiments for M. Dupin de Francoeuil, and those of Jean Jacques for the fair Madame d'Houdetôt, but one gets slight illumination from them on the eternal subject. A line of Alfieri is worth more than their entire existence, for there is little reality about them.

Goldoni's extreme prudence in matrimonial arrangements has already been noticed; it is surpassed only by the two English lawyers, Roger North and Sir Symonds d'Ewes. The first is deeply in love with a young lady, "but her fortune and mine were not enough to support the outward form of honor in the way of living . . ." So he himself arranges for her a

match with another, and observes with satisfaction that it turned out well. As for d'Ewes, his desire to arrange everything for everybody in a systematic manner, presents a most diverting picture to modern eyes. His first attraction is to a lady ten years his senior, but he abandons the match because this disparity "would doubtless, in process of time, have bred much nauseating inconvenience." The term is strong, but d'Ewes evidently felt it, since he finally settled on a girl of thirteen. "She was every way so comely, as that alone, if all the rest had wanted, might have rendered her desirable," is his comment. After dwelling for pages on the social and pecuniary advantages of the alliance — which fluctuates uncertainly for a time, owing to "the marvelous inconstancy" of the bride's grandmother, — they are finally wed; but the marriage is not consummated for more than a year, d'Ewes declaring, "it being perhaps the first example that ever was of that kind," and furnishing us with a series of prudent reasons for this postponement. His cool disposition and his energetic meddling in his own and his wife's family, brought to pass a number of quarrels and breaches, by which d'Ewes is sorely tried and vexed. When his own father wishes to re-marry with a young lady he takes this tone: "I should not only reap much discomfort in my present life," d'Ewes writes, indignantly, "as he might be drawn to give away his estate to the issue of a second wife . . . but . . . having abundant

experience of his inconstancy . . . my wishes were to see him well and happily married to some good and ancient widow every way fit for him." D'Ewes's father — "who was naturally marvelous inconstant" — does not take at all to the "ancient widow" idea, and there ensues a bitter quarrel which the reasonable son cannot understand.

Is romance really dying out? The marriage of Paulinus Pellæus, after a series of amours with the slaves of his father's house, reads like an eighteenth-century affair. When one reads stories like this, or Herbert of Cherbury's account of his own marital arrangements, they give us pause: we are not so sure. Do people nowadays arrange marriages for sons of fifteen as "a due remedy for lasciviousness"? At this age Herbert marries an heiress of twenty-one, from deliberate motives of physical and worldly expediency, among which is the wish to "save the cost of a steward on the estate." When Lady Herbert refuses, ten years later, to follow her husband to France, he states her refusal as a valid and sufficient excuse for infidelity, protesting only that his adventures were not accompanied with the "dissimulation and falsehood . . . commonly found in men addicted to love women."

Here, at least, is an attitude whose candor one may respect; how much more sturdy it is than that, for instance, of Chateaubriand! "Madame de Chateaubriand m'admire," etc., and his talk of owing "une

tendre et éternelle reconnoissance à ma femme" for not making trouble over his infidelities, which, of course, fill him with regret. "How sorry should I be to cause a moment of chagrin to Madame de Chateaubriand!" he exclaims with the most polite insincerity. From his boyhood's imaginary lady-love, noted by no less a scientist than M. Ribot, down to Madame de Beaumont, the vicomte's relations with women are shadowed by clouds of haze. His own Olympian condescension toward the sex produces an effect of indescribable fatuity.

Gibbon must not be forgotten, who "sighed as a lover," but "obeyed as a son," in the case of a match unexceptionable from the personal point of view, and obeyed, moreover, that father whose death he records as "the only event which saved me from a life of hopeless obscurity and indigence"! Under the circumstances, not forgetting either Gibbon's remark that he could not regret the early death of his five brothers and sisters, because their life "would have been sufficient to oppress my inheritance," one feels inclined to congratulate Mademoiselle Curchod on her escape. In his life of Gibbon, Mr. Morrison comments on this coldness, and believes Gibbon was more affectionate than the memoirs show. Since he can instance in support of this view only that Gibbon behaved in a considerate and dutiful manner toward his aunt and stepmother, the reader is disposed to take the *Memoirs* at their face value. In-

deed, to any sensitive nature the ugliness of these sentences could not have been permitted to stand; they would in themselves have jarred, demanding further explanation, even if their recording had been due to some special conscientiousness. To a temperament like Franklin's, a wholly utilitarian view of marriage and the sex-relation generally seems entirely consistent with the rest of his reasonable philosophy. It is interesting that this attitude is shared by such unedifying examples as de Retz, Bussy, Bassompierre, de Bernis, so that Franklin's remarks on the subject read like a translation from the French. They, doubtless, represent a consistent eighteenth-century view. In the case of Goethe, it has been seen how much his view of the subject was affected by the age at which he wrote — an age when most men turn a quiet backward glance on the emotions of their earlier vigor. Many and many writers of personal records are tinged in all their ideas with middle-age dogmas of conveniency and expediency. It cannot be forgotten how this latter change has affected the narratives wherein Augustin and Abélard tell of the passions of their youth. And yet, notwithstanding their self-disapproval, the reader beholds them scarred, suffering: Augustin unable to forget the woman who had borne him children; Abélard tortured by an even deeper humiliation.

Confessions of genuine passion are undoubtedly rare. One of the most convincing and human of all is that

of Mademoiselle de Montpensier; it is, perchance, the more affecting as it stands out against a background of stiff and artificial magnificence. Not a few books have been founded upon this *mémoire;* not one of them is so interesting or so valuable as the book itself. This big, jolly, bouncing Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans states naively her arrogant reason for the undertaking. "J'ai autrefois eu grande peine à concevoir," she observes, "de quoi l'esprit d'une personne accoutumée à la cour, et née pour y être avec le rang que ma naissance m'y donne, se pouvait entretenir, lorsqu'elle se trouve réduite à demeurer à la campagne; car il m'avoit toujours sembloit que rien ne me pouvoit divertir dans une éloignement forcé; et que d'être hors de la cour, c'étoit aux grands être en pleine solitude, malgré le nombre de leurs domestiques et la compagnie de ceux qui les visitent." Mademoiselle goes on to observe that, notwithstanding these conditions, she was able to pass her exile agreeably enough, by setting down, as exactly as possible, the events of her life from childhood to the present hour. One is irresistibly reminded of Mrs. Elton and Maple Grove and the barouche landau, whenever Mademoiselle touches on her own extraordinary eminence. By nature active, generous, impulsive, stormy; antithetical in every way to the stiff and formal surroundings; she is a figure of restless energy, perpetually struggling to maintain her balance on the lofty pinnacle whereon she finds herself. Her over-flattered

childhood caused her early to develop, she says, "un esprit de vanité fort incommode." She is as candid as possible: "Je ne fusse pas belle" is her observation of herself as a *parti;* and all her impetuous and touchy pride is set only on the idea of an establishment befitting her exalted position. This becomes a fixed idea; like the proud princess in the fairy-tale, she is very hard to suit; match after match falls through, till her father, and Louis XIV, her "*beau cousin,*" get thoroughly tired of her exigencies. She was the richest princess in all France; quick-tempered and rough, she loved riding and billiards and climbing ("*je grimpai comme un chat*"), and rude practical jokes. All this she knows, and that her "*imagination vive*" often pushed her to extremes. True she was not sensitive, for she opened and read the private letters of her friend, Madame de Fiesque; and yet she says: "I have a good heart"; and when her father died, she burst out bawling like a baby! The whole of volume four is taken up with the unfortunate passion which befell this proud woman at forty-three years of age; and it is developed with feeling, with sincerity, and with the most touching self-abnegation. The Duc de Lauzun is quite evidently not serious, and is much perplexed and overwhelmed when he finds that she is. In the first rush of her feeling and impetuosity, she very nearly gets the King's permission for the match — the intensity of her sincerity shakes even that royal iceberg.

She makes every sacrifice of pride; she does the proposing; she writes "C'est vous," on a slip of paper and hands it to Lauzun in the dance. She is so mortified by the extent of her agitation that she longs to be alone; she describes piteously how she does not even know what she said to him. Then the King's consent is withdrawn, and the tepid lover gets into cover as quickly as possible. Mademoiselle, poor soul, begs and pleads; she neither eats nor sleeps; she laments in public, till Lauzun himself begs her to cease; she weeps even in the dance, before all the court. It is indeed strange, she thinks, that, "née avec des grandeurs et des biens considérables . . . Dieu a permis que ma vie a été traversée par milles affaires désagréables"; which reproach shows again her attitude. Nothing more touching was ever read, and the disillusionment of the end is the final stroke of fate.

Then, among others, there is Leonora Christina of Denmark, who bore her twenty-one years of imprisonment wholly on account of love and loyalty to Corfitz Ulfeldt, her husband. And Marie Mancini, who says much less of her love for *le roi soleil*, but her one admission is significant. "Jamais rien en ma vie n'a tant touché mon âme" are her words; and they are sincere.

Other passions, in and outside of marriage, are movingly drawn for us; such as Lady Anne Halkett's and Sir Kenelm Digby's. But Sir Kenelm's flowery euphuism means less than the wifely fire of Margaret, Duchess

of Newcastle: "When absent from my Lord, it did break my sleeps and distemper my health"; or the simple statement of another loving woman, Lady Fanshawe: "We never had but one mind throughout our lives." Theobald Wolfe Tone, Sir Samuel Romilly, P. G. Hamerton, Marmontel, W. Hutton, and the merry Colley Cibber, are examples of those who carried a high degree of feeling into marriage. This last also mentions, in his whimsical way: "My muse and my spouse were equally prolifick"! Ali Hazin, the Persian, connects the whole idea of love with the poetic era of his youth. The Italian sculptor, Giovanni Dupré, is practically made by his passion for the rare and beautiful girl who became his wife, and of whom he writes in extravagant terms. On the other hand, what pathos in that page of *Præterita* which contains John Ruskin's only allusion to his life's unhappiness! "I wonder mightily," he writes wistfully, "what sort of a creature I might have turned out, if at this time love had been with me instead of against me. . . . Such things are not allowed in this world. The men capable of the highest imaginative passion are always tossed on fiery waves by it." And there is a man like Herbert Spencer lamenting the absence of emotion from his experience, and the consequently maimed appearance of life to his own eyes. Summing up, he writes: "At any rate one significant fact has been made clear, that in the genesis of a system of thought the emo-

tional nature is a large factor; perhaps as large a factor as the intellectual nature." Significant words these, which dignify and justify any comparative study one may make of these emotions. Also do they serve to suggest that to the scientific observation the presence of idealized feeling has its especial place and value for the mind of high quality, and for the nature of high attainments. The various experiences placed here have an especial use in showing that the ideal of marriage as friendship touched with passion is an ideal for which, and through which, much has been and will be accomplished.

At first glance no situation would appear to have altered more during the last four hundred years than that of women; no question shifted more in its broader aspect than the sex-question. Most of us believe that woman's attitude has not only changed toward man, but toward the world, and toward herself. Yet there have been others to point out — not without cynicism — some of our returns upon the past; to suggest that our boasted advance is not perhaps so wide as we believe, and that in actual accomplishment the area covered has been comparatively small. That in the position of women there have been vital changes, no one can for an instant deny. An entire class has been created; the woman worker has appeared on the world's stage, bringing with her new liberties, laws, responsibilities, and justifications. As a self-supporting agent,

as an intellectual force, woman practically enters upon existence with the nineteenth century; but as sweetheart, as daughter, as wife, as mother, as friend, she *did* exist before. The respect and equality which we have granted and are granting to the working woman has already served to modify the structure of society — for good or evil, according as the theorist sees it — and to alter the existing face of things. But when the European woman of the past is shown us in pictures painted by her own hand, she is depicted in surroundings much less like the Oriental harem than later reformers would wish us to believe. Grant her a position sufficiently high in the social scale, and she enjoyed no mean degree of liberty, independence, and power. Full legal rights were not hers, but had they been, it is surely true that legal rights would have modified very little the course of a Catherine of Russia, a Teresa of Avila.

Change in the position of woman, when it is examined in the light of recorded personal experience, is seen to be really an approach by the women of the lower working class to the enjoyment of the same degree of liberty as their sisters of the leisure class. It was upon these working women that the chains were knotted, that the burdens of life were laid, and made heavier by the fact of sex. Of the sunburned creatures, male and female, bending in the fields, whom La Bruyère saw, it was the female who suffered the more intolerable miseries, it was the female who rose to partake of a more hysterical

vengeance. The rôle of woman in the French Revolution is a leading, not a supplementary, rôle; and this fact is, in itself, explanatory, for the personal attitudes and opinions of such sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth-century women included in the catalogue of *mémoiristes*, are enough to show why the woman's movement was delayed so long. Mill's *Essay on the Subjection of Women* is written in the interest of a class which sprang into being with the nineteenth century; and which aimed, at first, more to equalize existing conditions than to create new ones.

It is a great pity that autobiographers in general have failed to record the symptoms in themselves accompanying the development of the sexual instinct. Rousseau does so fully and valuably; Brandès gives a note to the effect that the revelations of coarse boy companions brought him bitter misery; and one or two others touch upon this topic; but the loss to educators from a general neglect of it through authentic experiences remains great.

Examination of the relations of the sexes by means of these individual ideas and feelings, shows at least that it is their exterior, rather than their interior relations, which have been altered by civilization. The great intimate and immutable feelings display the same strength, the same variety. Such jottings as are made in these pages touch, after all, only familiar scenes and pictures, though in unfamiliar speech and dress. The mutual

affection of Augustin and Monica, of De Thou for his parents, of Margaret of Newcastle for her husband, of Cardan for his unworthy son — these are the things we see and understand. Much, much has changed. Youths of fifteen do not to-day decide to marry as "a due remedy for lasciviousness"; few mothers nowadays receive the confidences made by her son to Madame de Sévigné, or would retail them afterwards in letters to a young daughter. The attitude of servant and master, of employer and employee, has turned its front as completely as the attitude of the cultivated person toward nature. It is not customary now for us to apply to Alpine scenery the epithet "nasty," as did Sophia of Hanover; and the terms of affectionate contempt with which writers speak of their menials and servitors have vanished with the class itself. But these are outside things; whether we like it or not, we must recognize that with the addition, perhaps, of an increased mutual respect, men and women still stand toward each other much as they did in the younger years of the world.

# CHAPTER XVI

## HUMOR

The seriousness of the autobiographical mood tells against deliberate humor, though it frequently throws an unconscious humor sharply into relief. He who is gifted with what Gozzi calls the "democritic" spirit is not apt to be moved to self-study, since the prerequisite to self-study is the habit of taking oneself seriously. Now a self-student may take himself seriously in two ways: either with or without an appreciation of the seriousness of anybody else. The elder records rarely take their surroundings into account; humor in them, therefore, is restricted to coarse, practical joking, to repartee of the "You 're another" variety, and to anecdotes, such as of a lady falling into a fountain and emerging covered with mud. In the eighteenth century begins that deeper-dyed humor, which comes of feeling oneself to be serious in alien or grotesque surroundings, — of laughing partly at them and partly at oneself; as does Mademoiselle Delaunay at the patronesses who promenaded her from salon to salon like a monkey. This is more nearly humor as we know it to-day — the acute perception of a lack of proportion. The joke, so-called, is given less space; and the perception becomes positive or negative, so that we laugh

with the writer or at him. In such an example as Professor Huxley's telling us that he was named after the disciple with whom he felt the greatest sympathy, we smile because he has seen the connection first. When Ann Gilbert at eighty does not feel "grown up," we smile at her *naïveté*, and sigh at our own perception. When Miss Frances Power Cobbe, writing of a deep and important crisis in her life, says: "I cut off my hair and faced the future!" we laugh because she does not see the lack of proportion at all. Negative perception leads to the description by Herbert Spencer, in accurate and scientific language, of his finding a place to board "where two little girls became the vicarious objects of my philoprogenitive instinct"; and also to the immortal paragraph in which he warns the American against the evils of iced water. Again, we have Chateaubriand, priding himself on his English, so that he translates for us the description on his English passport, "Favoris et cheveux bruns," as "Brown hair, and fits"! M. de Chateaubriand becomes sublime on the subject of his marriage: "Madame de Chateaubriand m'admire, sans avoir jamais lu deux lignes de mes ouvrages!" he exclaims, in a wonderment that goes to the heart.

But we hurry on too fast. Let us linger awhile in those days when, if the smile were rare, the laughter rang Homeric and full; the days when practical jokes, of the type restricted nowadays to the hoarded and secluded energies of youth at college, then diverted and

occupied the greybeard and philosopher. That brave woman, Leonora Christina Ulfeldt, thought it inexpressibly amusing to dice for drinks (incognito) with the soldiers of the guard. When Hortense Mancini's sister went to sleep with her mouth open, and inadvertently bit the intruding finger of a *gouvernante*, the entire court was convulsed by the incident. Hortense also devoted two pages to the description of an elaborate jest played by the whole court on her little sister of six years old — a jest too shocking and too coarse to repeat. The lowest slum tenement to-day would not combine so to abuse the dignity and innocency of childhood; and it makes one feel the truth of what Dr. Gummere writes of "the cruelty of primitive humor, the beatings and hammerings, and bloody heads, and broken bones." As an amusement, this sort of thing is hard for us to comprehend; whereas, Cellini's famous jest of the Spaniard Diego at the supper-party, is one that would always wring response, because it has its roots in the very foundation of masculine nature. That a gentleman, whose tender mood had been somewhat heightened by the pleasures of the table, should make advances to a lady present, only to discover that the rich dress disguised one of his own sex, — this, even if encouraged to proceed to the point of crudity, is still an excellent and humorous jest, and doubtless has been an hundred times re-enacted at similar supper parties. All the jokes which practise on the be-

fuddled senses of a friend in liquor, from the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid and Ali-Hassan to similar experiences of Christopher Sly, the tinker, strike a certain sort of person as irresistibly funny. No doubt these are the people who think it is humorous to make their cats and dogs, or even their cows and chickens, tipsy, and who crowd the playhouse to roar at a drunken scene. And there are others to whom such a sense of humor seems vestigiary, like the vermiform appendix. Cellini is rich in examples of rough and cruel jesting, but if we think this accounted for by his swaggering personality, let us turn to the quarrels described by his contemporary, Cardan. The lecture-room squabble with Cardan's colleague, Branda Porrò, and the encounter with another professor, Francanzano, are told in a similar vein. In the latter story, Francanzano, wishing to avoid meeting the mathematician, left the laboratory in such haste that he became entangled in his long robe and fell to the floor, amid the jeers of the bystanders. It is characteristic of Cardan that this is the one anecdote he gives for no other reason than its humor, although he often writes of his own peculiarities with a twinkle in his eye. Neither his ironical, sceptical mind, nor Cellini's rough irreverence and love of the ridiculous, had apparently the slightest effect in modifying their intense superstition. Evidently, such superstition was general and not individual. Sometimes the *mémoiriste* delights to tell us the effect of the jest on

himself. Mademoiselle de Montpensier rarely omits to tell how she laughed at herself; and even so rigid a person as the Duc de Bouillon dwells on his capacity for fun, before he began "to think seriously of my soul."

Bussy, we remember, could laugh like Pantagruel, and he had also wit, humor, and quick perception. Bassompierre, quick at repartee though he was, is more gay than humorous; he has none of Bussy's insight and intelligence, yet he has a light touch. Of a certain year, when he had an ugly suit for breach of promise on his hands, other amorous entanglements, and debts to the amount of 700,000 livres, this is how he describes their dismissal: "Je fus délivré à même en peu de temps de tous ces divers et facheux inconvénients"! This is not overstating the case, and at least the lever of the writer's gayety has served to raise the desperate situation. In the same merry mood Goldoni wanders, hungrily but cheerily, over Italy. So Gozzi quits his home, and bids his mother adieu forever with "hilarity." Gozzi is truly the laughing cynic, a more genuine *Democritus jr.* than Richard Burton was. Of the "democritic" spirit also is Wilhelmine of Bareith; in her attitude toward her parents and her surroundings, toward her husband's relatives, — a theme, by the way, which whets the meekest tongue, — she shows a brave humor deeply rooted in cynicism. This "democritic" spirit goes hand in hand with cheerfulness and courage; it

is the serenity of the true pessimist. Next to the robust and Rabelaisian temper, it is the more frequent form taken by humor before 1750. Dauntless it is where Colley Cibber exclaims: "Let them call me any Fool but an unchearful one!" It alone enables Madame Mère du Régent to bear with equanimity her difficult life; Gourville, to write serenely of the happiness of his invalid days; and the good Morellet, to regard the Revolution in the manner of a benign Swift. In the hands of Madame de Staal-Delaunay, the Thackerayan cynicism has also the Thackerayan tenderness. With what a humorous pride she describes her progress in the train, first of this patroness, then of that, led about like a monkey; while the sketches of her benefactresses are done with infinite vivacity, yet without malice. Mademoiselle Delaunay, like Fanny Burney, was the victim of people who thought they knew better what was good for her than she did herself — people who deemed it fitting that a cultivated woman of intellect should become a sort of upper waiting maid to the Duchesse du Maine. Poor, shy Mademoiselle Delaunay, clumsy from near-sightedness and nervousness, kept from the books and studies which she loved, conscious in despair that her gifts and talents were being utterly smothered, she is drawn with touches of genius. Her situation, though not unlike Miss Burney's, is more poignant, because she is more clear-sighted, more sophisticated, and more alone. Fanny is always under the awe and charm of

royalty, however uncomfortable she may be; and she has brief respites with Mrs. Dulany, with her father, and her friends. Mademoiselle Delaunay has no respites and no holidays; never is her life her own, and never for one instant is she so dazzled by her patron's rank as to overestimate her character. One sees her shrug her delicate shoulders as she writes.

Fate was kinder, after all, to the little Burney. She had tasted sweet success and much affection; and she was released in time to have many happy, tranquil years of marriage and motherhood. Mademoiselle Delaunay was really forced to select a husband as a means of escape, and then, after all, she was as much prisoner as ever. Madame du Maine would not hear of letting her go to the quiet country home; she was not even permitted to retire to the little cottage bequeathed to her by her best friend. Then, almost for the first time, she sheds bitter tears, for through most of the story she smiles; she knows what life means to the dependent; she knows all the tyranny in the whims of the great. With her brave humor she looks about her, she smiles, she shrugs, she thinks "It might have been!" Her courage, her philosophy, her deep love of study sustain her. It is a dauntless record, this optimism of the pessimist, this humor of the seeing eye. Here lies no illusion; and endurance is made possible only by the quiet analysis, the broad, aloof point of view, and the thorough understanding which this courageous woman brought to her

situation. Of her one girlish love-affair she writes with grace and dignity. She had all a sensitive woman's love of beauty, and knew herself to be plain; her one vanity, she declares, was a wish to be reasonable; and she takes her pen in hand for us, smiling, observant of every detail in her own little corner of that base and splendid world. Like Mrs. Oliphant, this record of disappointment is the most bracing and salutary reading in the world, — salutary in the case of Mademoiselle Delaunay, largely because it shows what a true and developed sense of humor may accomplish.

Recalling the painful solemnity of the Georges — so distinct that it almost set the fashion of a lack of humor, — one regrets that their great ancestress bequeathed her son so little of her gift of laughter. The Electress Sophia wrote her life in lively French, to keep up her spirits during her husband's absence. The portrait she paints of her young self is full of *verve:* a girl of high spirits, "interrupted only by violent fits of devotion," of a clear insight, and not very ardent temperament, whose gayety carries her safely over many pitfalls and vexations. Her humorous observation of men and things amuses us still. When she goes to see Marie Mancini (whom her husband greatly admired), she draws the sentimental beauty with caustic touches, and dryly notes that Marie was doubtless "livelier with men than with women." She pokes fun at the eternal love theme in Italian conversation; at the stingy gifts made by

Louis XIV, "a box set with poor pearls"; at Monsieur's little fussy ways; at the great, empty country houses of the poorer nobility — at everything, herself included, which strikes her keen sense of the ridiculous.

Another humorist whose wit had a biting edge is de Retz: his *mémoires* are managed with infinite *entrain*. Any reader of Madame de Sévigné's knows this must be so, remembering how she loved the "*coadjuteur*." Humor, indeed, is almost the first passport to Madame de Sévigné's good graces: she is never tart except about some person who lacks it. De Retz, of course, is one of the great historical and political *mémoiristes*; he has been already cited among those chroniclers to whom the historical novelist is most in debt. His book was called the *Breviary of Revolutionists*, though to our mind the term "politician" comes nearer the mark — the busy, active, cynical intriguer, working and plotting amid the indescribable confusions of the Fronde. But for laughter de Retz never lacks matter; his own conduct perpetually amuses him; he has gay philosophy, cynicism and a love of jesting, all together. Of his quickness in retort there are many examples. None is more characteristic than his reply, when insulted by La Rochefoucauld: "Vous êtes un poltron (je mentois car il est assurément fort brave) et je suis un prêtre; le duel nous est défendu." Here the parenthesis and the antithesis are de Retz to the life.

We have mentioned Gourville in passing; his imper-

turbable cheerfulness deserves to be emphasized. No infirmity, he tells us, can cloud "ma gaieté ordinaire; je m'amuse avec mes domestiques, je fais des plaisanteries avec eux." His slight personality and genial sincerity became dignified in his later life into something of a higher quality. Toward the end he counts his days, smiling; hoping each spring he may live to taste the strawberries, "et quand ils sont passées j'aspire aux pêches"; and in this mellow mood he sits tranquilly till his page is closed. Much more fretful in tone is that witty unrest before the French Revolution. Marmontel and Morellet show less capacity for easy laughter. Horse-play has largely disappeared, and those jokes with which Marmontel tries "parfois égayer mon récit," strike us as unendurably dull. Yet he has the humor of observation, abundant and keen. Who can forget the visit to Madame de Pompadour, or the reading of his play before the *Comédie*? The practical joke has its recrudescence in the Napoleonic era. Marbot plays the jest of an earlier day; the pages of Alexandre Dumas ring with laughter. We laugh with the indiscreet Marbot at the jest which overturns the majesty of the First Consul. One is inclined to think that it is perhaps due to this abundant flow of animal spirits that Marbot's *Mémoires* stand head and shoulders above the huge mass of Napoleonic personal records; he animates, he vivifies the scene; he is never dull, dazzled, or overawed, and the mantle of Monluc at mo-

ments seems to have fallen on his shoulders. In any study of the psychology of the Frenchman of 1800, Marbot must serve as an important example.

There are *mémoiristes*, otherwise perfectly sensible, who have absurd whims, or impossible theories, which grow over and clog their sense of humor like some traveling weed. Of such is Baron Holberg's description of his symptoms of ill-health: "When my disease attacked the region of the heart I used to be seized with a mania for reform." Alfieri shared this notion of the reaction of physical on mental states, and carried it to the point of times and seasons. These ideas seem amusing to us now, just as we think Mademoiselle Victorine de Chastenay funny in her sense of the proprieties. She met young Napoleon Bonaparte somewhere and they discussed Ossian together, but when he rode over to call, with a volume of the poems, she would not see him. She sighs as she tells it, and evidently thinks that she narrowly escaped being Empress of the French.

The absence of any sense of humor is characteristic of those persons with a grievance, whose confessions contain such bitter revilings of the world. Mademoiselle Sophie Clairon, the famous *tragédienne*, is one of these, Sir Egerton Brydges is another. Brydges, so suggestive in criticism, so keenly appreciative and intellectual, is yet worked upon to such a degree by his morbid sensitiveness and lack of humor as utterly to lose all perspective, all natural proportion. In Hector

Berlioz, the musical composer, existed the most startling alternations between a total lack of a sense of humor and a keen ability in exterior humorous description. It is hard to reconcile the defiant solemnity with which he mismanages some of his private affairs, with the delicately humorous perceptions of such a scene as his dialogue at the opera between "un jeune homme épluchant un orange, et l'inconnu, son voisin, en proie à la plus vive émotion."

"Mon Dieu, Monsieur; calmez-vous!"

"Non, c'est irrésistible, c'est accablant, celà tue!"

"Allons, du courage! Vous offrirai-je un morceau de cet orange?"

"Ah, c'est sublime!"

"Elle est de Malte!"

"Ah, Monsieur, quelle musique!"

"Oui, c'est très joli."

Arnold ascribes Shelley's famous letter to Harriet as due to a monstrous lack of sense of humor; and there are certain quarrels of Brydges, certain excuses of Berlioz, which approach it in monstrosity. Reading of them, one is inclined to feel that humor acts like a protective tissue to certain qualities of the human sensitiveness, so that its absence lays bare those delicate fibres which are not intended to stand the outer air. Conversely, the protective tissue may be too thick, and so certain dullnesses will follow. Your practical joker is apt to lack dignity of mind. A good example

is shown in Solomon Maimon, the Rabbi, who writes of his own attempt at suicide as "serio-comic," and of other serious experiences of life, his desertion of wife and family, for instance, in the same vein. The coldly cynical humor of Talleyrand added to his deficiency in personal ethics, and caused him to be more universally hated than many a solemn and fatuous prig.

Already the reader must have noticed the preponderance of Latin examples — the Italian, the French. Comparatively early, it is seen, a strong perception of the absurd existed among them. The solemn person with no sense of humor or the humorous, is to be found most often on Anglo-Saxon soil. Chateaubriand, already cited, is the most striking French example of this, and he is modern. Could one take Lamartine's *Les Confidences* as worth anything at all they might be placed beside Chateaubriand. But Lamartine simply strikes one as "pinnacled high in the intense inane." If the early French and Italian autobiography is almost never too serious, the early English one is almost never anything else. Such a remark as Professor Huxley's about his name is practically unheard-of before the nineteenth century. The English self-biography from about 1600 to 1700 is fierily serious; from about 1700 to 1800 fatuously serious. The cases in which the lack of humor is as marked as color blindness, are largely in the majority. Take Dr. Richard Edgeworth's account of himself. At college

he had, it appears, "a want of taste for the joys of intoxication"; and married early because "he was fond of all the happiness which female society can bestow." His choice of a wife was unfortunate: "She lamented about trifles; and the lamenting of a female with whom we live does not render home delightful," he justly observes. All the proceedings of Dr. Edgeworth and his friend, Mr. Thomas Day, are perfectly original in their intense gravity. One is not surprised, though considerably amused, to hear that he took his boy of eight years old to see Jean Jacques Rousseau, in order to get that practical person's opinion of the child. Imagine the fluent generalizer helpless before a literal British father! But, however serious, Dr. Edgeworth is simple. It is reserved for the imitator of Richardson, Hayley, or "Perdita" Robinson, to display to us the results of a tortuously solemn overwriting. When William Hayley's mother rented a house, he puts it in this way: "The excellent mother, who with the greatest vigilance and anxiety had conducted her single orphan through all the perils of infancy and youth, had taken a house which gave to the windows of the young poet's library a pleasing appearance of verdure and retirement." When he falls in love he terms the lady "the blooming object of my future wishes"; and he speaks of his crazy mother-in-law, who gave them no end of trouble, as "the deranged parent of the hapless, though lovely, Eliza."

But it is Perdita, after all, Mary Robinson, writing seriously enough, heaven knows! who carries this style to the extreme which renders it entirely humorous. Hers is an apology we begin to read with laughter, but end, falteringly, close to tears; an amazing combination of the naïve and artificial, strong in its revelation of personality, however restricted in the means of expression. Notwithstanding Perdita's self-contemplation as a heroine of romance — a self-contemplation which usually quite does away with candor — yet the reader obtains an ineffaceable impression of sincerity, of that deeper sincerity which is conveyed by true seriousness. In all her tortuous affectations of style, Mary Robinson yet paints herself with the touch of an uncompromising realist; we see her as she lived, gay, pleasure-loving, romantic, affectionate.

"Every event of my life" (thus Perdita takes her elegant pen in hand) "has been more or less marked by the progressive evils of a too acute sensibility." The lady in charge of her education "was mistress of the French and Italian languages, was said to be a perfect arithmetician and astronomer, and possessed the art of painting on silk to a degree of exquisite perfection." The sequence of these accomplishments shows the writer's own estimate of their importance; no false literary pretensions ever cause Perdita to hide her honest opinions. While still a child, she marries; there follows a rustic retirement combined from Rousseau,

Richardson, and Mrs. Radcliffe. It gives the inexpressibly delightful picture of the writer, clad "with peculiar but simple elegance — in a light brown lustring, with plain round cuffs," rocking a willow cradle under the window hung with woodbine, — in sooth, a veritable Romney. But, alas! this happiness is interrupted by Mr. Robinson's "pecuniary derangements," which cause a return to town, and to the stage. There his attentions stray towards a certain female "who was devoted," says Perdita, severely, "to a life of unrestrained impropriety." She goes on to describe her rival's dress: "Sattins, richly embroidered, were her daily habiliments," for Perdita loved dress, and at every crisis in her life her costume is detailed. Against this too-powerful charmer her own "nightgown of pale-blue lustring with a chip hat," failed to win back the recalcitrant Robinson, but it called to the wearer the attention of the Prince of Wales.

Perdita's portrait shows a young woman, slight, piquante, and plaintive. Her confession is seriously intended: "These pages are the pages of truth unadorned by romance, and unembellished by the graces of phraseology," she declares; and sometimes the truth, touched with that "too acute sensibility," produces startling results. It takes away one's breath, for instance, when she is going to a ball, to read: "I was at least some hours in decorating my person for this new sphere of fascination . . . because my shape at

this time required some arrangement, owing to the visible increase in my domestic solicitudes"! Yet this mincing nicety of phrase is swept out in honest sorrow when the baby dies; and it is with a deep, intense devotion she speaks of the surviving daughter, to whom she clung in all her illness and poverty.

This record breaks off just at the point of her capitulation to the Regent, one of the most pathetic and significant breaks in literature. She can find no real excuse, and the romantic strain gives her no aid. She was young and beautiful and an actress; her lover was "George the Good, the Magnificent, the Great"; and she is not artificial enough to convince herself. For she is not artificial, however simpering her prose. Her mother-feeling was warm and true; she had delicate and just perceptions; she was bedazzled and in love; she is wholly real. The picture of her in her youth and beauty in her little day of triumph, and her long abandonment of illness and misery, work on us as if she had existed in the pages of Samuel Richardson rather than in life. The poignant reality of great fiction is seldom attained by the half-existence of most human beings.

"And this," our reader asks, with raised eyebrows, "is this humor?" Perhaps not; yet the muse, as we remember, holds the tragic touching the comic mask.

# CHAPTER XVII

## SELF-ESTEEM

*The Memoirs of the late Mary Robinson, written by Herself,* belong to the apologetic type of autobiographical writings. Discussion of the Apology, so-called, would tend to lead us far from self-delineations in general, since in the initial meaning of defense or vindication many of the great apologies are not even autobiographical in tone. In truth, the earlier among them suffer for this very reason. No one reading the defense of Socrates, or that of Giordano Bruno made before the Inquisitorial Tribunal of Venice, but feels they have lost in convincing power by their incomplete subjectivity. They remain the defense of opinion, of philosophy. Socrates confines himself to exposition; any personal references are most carefully made to his actions only; he answers his accusers rather by counter-opinion and a characteristic display of dialectics, than by direct self-explanation, direct challenge to proof. The majesty of his concluding prophecy is but the accidental witness to his real indifference as to his fate. Surely, had Socrates deigned to show the men of Athens "he in himself as he really was," his reasons for the beliefs they controverted, the evolutionary process by which he had arrived at them, his mental progress to a

change of view, one cannot say he would have lived, but one can say that sentence of death would have been even more reluctantly passed upon him.

The examination of Bruno is more modern, his replies stick closer to the point; yet he, too, disdains all appeal which might have been made by a clear self-analysis, a candid and full self-explanation. The two cases hold this in common, that both men are wholly sure of their own standpoint. They but answer, with a legible contempt, the grossly ignorant and narrow charges of a majority whom they have learned to despise. Certainty, therefore, robs them of incentive to self-delineation, and so their apologies are kept to the limits of the objective. If this be so, it must be that there are two forms of *Apologia:* one written or spoken entirely to convince outsiders; the other partially, if not wholly, to convince oneself. Often, besides stating his position to a critical world, the apologist is anxious to restate it to his own soul. In such an event he begins tentatively, with a personal narrative, which serves later to develop his *credo,* and on which substructure he may erect his final beliefs. Such apologies as those of Newman, of Al-Ghazzali, of Uriel d'Acosta, of Lorenzino de' Medici, of Abélard, of Marshal Marmont, however diverse, yet all show a conclusion firmer, more definite, and written with more conviction than the commencement. Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua* was successful in its (unconscious) primal object, aiding the

writer to feel that the criticism against him was unjust and without foundation. Compared with his brother Francis Newman's *Phases of Faith*, some of its peculiarities will be found hereditary. In both cases, creed ideas have entirely obliterated family and friendly affections. In the bald, high-keyed story of Lorenzino de' Medici, the reasons for his committing murder, when written down, seem cogent enough: the telling steadies him, the ending is tranquil. To the peculiar state of mind revealed in Abélard's celebrated letter, physical causes, no doubt, contribute; yet the open mind may read that he is arguing himself into conviction; and that all the later calm, patronizing counsel to Héloise on theological points and the conduct of her convent, is the outcome of his success. The indictment of Marshal Marmont was of a type which, beyond all others, a man of spirit finds hard to bear: time-serving, ingratitude, disloyalty to the master who had made him, were least among its articles. Marmont's eight volumes are chiefly filled with historical and political material illustrative of the Napoleonic epoch; the self-analysis is placed where it may favorably interpret certain events which had apparently condemned him. In the process of writing his uneasiness gives way to assurance. Uriel d'Acosta lashes himself into a fury by dwelling upon his sufferings, and so justifies to himself his somewhat rapid changes of front in religious matters. Al-Ghazzali's treatise is

an apology only in the doctrinal sense; yet he quite evidently upholds and confirms his change to súfiism by retracing the evolutionary process of his ideas. Even in slight, in trivial apologies, there is a similar development from the desire of self-justification. Sir Walter Scott, in his *General Preface*, is a little uneasy at the various deceptions which had been necessary to preserve the secret of the "Great Unknown." He makes, as it were, a clean breast of it, and at the ending he feels better. The *mémoires* of Marie Mancini and of the Margravine of Anspach, display, in Mrs. Ward's delicate phrase, all the familiar emotions of *femme incomprise*, who must tell herself, again and again, that she is right, and the world unjust. In the latter case the Margravine succeeds so well that before the end she is quite ready to assert that black is white.

One can but repeat again that the great apologies of literature singularly fail to convince. To-day no jury would condemn to death Socrates nor Bruno, yet the reader, acting as juror, feels with impatience that neither Socrates nor Bruno made the best of his case. The *Apologia* of Newman never satisfied his critics, and was not regarded with enthusiasm by his partisans. The truth that "qui s'excuse, s'accuse" is profoundly felt at bottom to underlie a man's attempts at self-justification, especially since it must needs underlie his manner of presenting them. The absence of all apologetic trend in lives like Jerome Cardan's, or Herbert

Spencer's, or George Sand's, or even Benvenuto Cellini's; their setting forth of the facts impersonally, has added enormously to their weight and dignity without dulling their sensitiveness or perception. They are as quick and ready to set down their own wrongdoings as any apologist; only they have more desire to paint a truthful picture of an entire creature than to soothe an irritated self-esteem. "I am not ignorant," we remember Cardan's asserting, "that nature has created me irascible and libertine; among my chief sins are pride, pertinacity in contention, imprudence, and a desire for revenge." These are the facts, but to present them does not jar the writer's self-esteem; and it is such a jar which produces the apologetic trend in narratives autobiographically planned. Its very essence thus foredooms an apology to fail in its particular aim, however it may succeed in other ways. The quantity and quality of a writer's self-esteem is seen to be, therefore, a very large factor, affecting both the character of his work, the character of his success, and his conception of both. This factor largely determines whether his attitude shall be apologetic or non-apologetic in his self-presentation. The vanity or modesty of the self-student, his own estimate of his qualities, of his failure or his success, may be profitably compared, if only for the better understanding of his autobiographical intention, and for its execution.

Charles Darwin, in speaking of his success, declares

it due to his "moderate abilities — love of science — unbounded patience in long reflecting over any subject — industry in observing and collecting facts, a fair share of invention as well as of common-sense." Trollope, in a similar summing-up, lays "claim to whatever merit should be accorded me for persevering diligence in my profession." He dwells on the necessity for the "habit of regarding his work as a normal condition of his life." John Stuart Mill asserts that he possessed but one natural gift, a "disposition to thoroughness," while he attributes a large share of his ideas to his wife. Lack of self-confidence and the accent of self-depreciation are frequently to be found in minds of a higher order. Sometimes the true humility of religious feeling produces it; sometimes the love and search for truth. Augustin tells us that he was never a learned man; his deep humility on the subject of his sinful nature is well known. Patrick calls his own writings "drivel," and terms himself "the rudest and least of all the faithful, and most contemptible to very many. . . . I blush to-day, and greatly fear to expose my unskilfulness." Cardinal Bellarmin is aware of his talent for the pulpit, but appears to be very humble-minded about his other great talents. David Hume allows himself only a keen ardor in study; and there is surely a deep modesty in the passage where George Sand speaks of "le manque d'éclat de ma vie et de mon esprit," and characteristic pen-

etration is shown in her self-estimate. "Je suis très gaie," she concludes, cheerfully; "je dois avoir des gros défauts; je suis comme tout le monde, je ne les vois pas." Franklin might have echoed the words, for they are equally true of his well-balanced qualities. He dwells with most approbation on his own thrift and system and, by way of summing-up, says: "I was free from any wilful gross immorality and injustice . . . I had therefore a tolerable character"; — a very accurate and moderate estimate. The impersonal account of Gibbon's "naked and unblushing Truth" lends an air of candor to his brief and modest review of his own abilities.

Although the serious sententiousness of Herbert Spencer's style produces the impression of great self-esteem, yet we find him making certain admissions which are the result of real and deep modesty. One is of carelessness, as when he says his knowledge of French was gained "by scrambling through half-a-dozen easy novels, content to gather the drift, and skipping where I failed to understand." This sort of admission is extremely rare. Rousseau may analyze his sensuality; Cardan may dilate on the depravity of his fondness for gambling; but neither one would, for an instant, permit it to be supposed that he shared the carelessness or the inadequacy of the common world.

One of the most interesting things contained in the fragmentary autobiography of the great Arabian phil-

osopher and physician, Avicenna, is his admission that he failed for so long to understand Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Though he had read it forty times and knew it by heart, he had said, "This book is incomprehensible"; until finally a little treatise by El Farabi, picked up at a street-stall, made it clear to him, much to his delight. This is Avicenna's one admission of inadequacy, for in other respects he allows himself no failures.

Ernest Renan, who speaks of "mon incapacité d'être méchant ou seulement de le paraître," gives a minute and most suggestive account of the curious character which his scientific education built upon his decidedly clerical temperament. His indecision, his idealism, and his tolerance were extreme — "tous mes défauts de prêtre." But, what is more important to us, he avows that, although in his writings he was of absolute sincerity, yet in conversation he failed of it. "Je dis à chacun ce que je suppose devoir lui faire plaisir." This is just the opposite of Cardan's great defect. Renan thinks that he was not modest; that, though he lived austerely, "Je vis bien la vanité de cette vertu comme de toutes les autres . . . la nature ne tient du tout à ce que l'homme soit chaste. . . . Je n'en persistai pas moins, et je m'imposais les mœurs d'un pasteur protestant." His great error Renan believes to have been his coldness in friendship. A tendency to lying he frankly avows, but claims to have eradicated and overcome it. These pages in the *Souvenirs* might be taken for a

text to show the clear light which such balanced self-presentation may cast into our darker corners. The same fundamental and modest self-understanding distinguishes Marmontel, who appears on the surface somewhat self-satisfied. In the account of his study to remedy defects of memory, there is shown a full appreciation of his inadequacies. Jung Stilling describes his many successful operations for cataract; and modestly declares that he never performed it without "doubt and trembling." Béranger's naïf humility is a part of his most winning, sympathetic personality.

A man's admissions on the subject of his intellectual achievement will be found to be the final criterion of his modesty or his vanity. If their sincerity outweigh the exultation caused by success, then his vanity is not deep enough to be injurious, however it may overlie the surface of his personality. Such an one is Goldoni, self-admiring and self-pleased like a child, but never losing hold of his real aims. Delight in one's success, pleasure at the world's applause, together with a recollection of the stress of work to which it is owing, sometimes gives a false impression of fatuity. Macready, the tragedian, shows this, and his Italian compeer, Adelaide Ristori. Macready shows, in addition, a deep religious feeling. Tommaso Salvini writes that he never fully mastered his equipment, and that he committed "involuntarily, lamentable and inartistic outbursts."

Study of these examples may show that a certain

standard is established by which to measure the depth and extent of an autobiographer's self-esteem. When we find a man satisfied with his work because of its effect, sure he has genius because he has success, sure his labors have been conscientious and thorough because the public is impressed, then we have intrinsic vanity. Such is the fatuous vanity of Chateaubriand, already mentioned; of Richard Cumberland, whose tiresome plays have not survived their day; of the eccentric Baron Holberg, of Trenck, of Marie Bashkirtsev, of Arminius Vambéry, and of Hans Andersen. It is not to be mistaken for the much less serious manifestation seen in spontaneous natures whose high spirits and vitality give them frank delight in their own powers. Baron Marbot and Alexandre Dumas exemplified this simple and innate joyousness. To such natures there is no line drawn between work and play. It is as different from the hypersensitive egotism of a Rousseau as light from darkness. Yet a true understanding of Rousseau at least makes plain that this undue self-consciousness had its root in an excess of diffidence and self-distrust. The *Confessions* form an elaborate survey of the unhealthy conditions produced by poverty and talent. The humiliation of his boyhood and youth, the perpetual mortification of that keenly sensitive fibre, the absence of healthy self-confidence, of healthy, equal friendships, of free and encouraging surroundings, bred so violent a reaction that only in self-contempla-

tion, in self-admiration, in self-created faith, could this irritable nature be at all calmed and soothed. Such a temperament is forced to create a protective tissue for its own morbid nerves. If one is poor, distressed, sensitive to beauty, and overcharged, perpetually in one sort of servitude or another, one's self-esteem must be self-fed. And no detractor of Rousseau's errors of ethics and taste is more severe to them than he is himself. With remorseful severity he speaks of that disposal of his children to the *Enfants Trouvés*, which is the chief blot upon his life, because its one deliberately bad action. The egotism, the vanity of Rousseau is extraordinarily complex, and has never been taken into account in the critical estimates of his nature. His work is as powerful and penetrating in its self-analysis as it is weak and unjust in its estimate of others. Take his account of Madame de Warens: it is incredible, absurd, contradictory; evidently he has omitted some primal spring of action. No "cold, chaste" woman makes paramours out of her servants for intellectual reasons! Either Jean Jacques is simple and easily imposed upon, or else he is indulging his fancy. In place of saying: "Men I know," he should have said: "Myself I know, but nothing of other men." In every paragraph Rousseau shows that he has less intellectual than imaginative power, less intellectual than emotional genius. He is incapable of verbal memory, never "conceived" he says, but "felt"; his capacity for study,

and for the logical development of thought, was slight. But he was able to watch and to cast into words the play of life upon his vibrating, hypersensitive nerves, as few others have been able to do; and the value of the *Confessions* deepens with the advance of pyschology.

Frequently one may notice in an autobiographer one beloved vanity standing out from a mass of careful sincerities. Petrarch's scattered fragments of autobiography, placed together in order (in A. d'Ancona's *Raccolta*), show him to have been possessed of vanities unusually complex. In each breath where he gives himself praise, he then qualifies that praise with some humility. If his "familiarity was desired by great persons" and he grew vain therefrom, he hastens to assure you that there is no reason for such vanity. He appears to have had a restless and evanescent egoism, which touched only in passing the real emotional and intellectual force of the man.

Vidocq is proud of his style, which he declares a French chancellor read with pleasure. Gourville displays a conviction of his own great political importance; believes that he swayed the movements of France. No one but Gourville, however, thinks so. A like vanity is seen in De Blowitz. To Mademoiselle de Montpensier her own susceptibility to kindly feeling seemed very unusual "parmi les grands"; and when her father died, and she burst into tears, she comments: "J'ai le cœur bon."

Monluc is proud of his ferocity; Gozzi of his devotion to the purity of the Italian language; Madame Roland of nursing her baby, and of her generally scientific motherhood; Heinrich Heine of his irony and his success with women. Agrippa d'Aubigné greatly admired his own faculty in debate; on one occasion his discussion with the Bishop of Évreux lasted for five hours, and is thus described: "Le susdit prélat s'efforça de resoudre les difficultés que je lui proposais par de grands discours éblouissans; ce que m'engagea à lui faire une démonstration en forme, dont les deux premières propositions étoient tirées en termes formels de ses propres arguments. Cette contrebatterie mit mon antagoniste dans un tel embarras que les gouttes d'eau tomboient de son visage sur un Chrisostome manuscrit qu'il tenoit à la main."

Cardan seems vainer of his rapidity in acquiring Greek, and of his dreams, than of all his medical and mathematical discoveries. Cellini is as vain of his sword-play as Alfieri of his horsemanship, or Bussy of his facility in composing agreeable little verses. Miss Frances Power Cobbe owns to a vanity in her competent housekeeping, much as Catherine II admires her own really precocious self-restraint and intellectual understanding of others which alone preserved her life during the first years of her marriage. Richard Cumberland is hugely vain of his notable acquaintance; Psalmanazar of his talent for deception; Sir Egerton

Brydges of his aristocratic exclusiveness; William Henry Ireland of his songs in the Shakespearean manner; Alexandre Dumas of his ability as a cook. A self-educated person like Lackington, the bookseller, is naturally vainer of his cultivation and citations, than of his innate qualities of energy and industry. An example of complete vanity is given in the singular memoirs of the Margravine of Anspach. This lady's conduct is frankly that of a person without dignity or morals. Separated from her husband, she lives for years as the Margrave's *maîtresse en titre*, and when she finally marries him, is amazed by the refusal of her daughters to see her, and of English society to receive her. In the passages of his *Apology*, Cibber struts to and fro, like a bantam cock; yet there are moments of modest candor which more than redeem the little man.

These instances are sufficient to demonstrate the capriciousness of vanities in people of weight. Touches of nature, too, they may bring near to us some of the more remote among our *mémoiristes*, and give us that friendly insight which is indispensable to our better understanding. But for a full aid and comprehension in the matter of intellectual growth it is not to these slight sketches we turn, but to the classic self-studies. He who wishes to see what self-education and self-control may accomplish, opens Alfieri; who wishes to observe the constitution and working of the mind called scientific, has before him Herbert Spencer's two

volumes. Of whatever *lacunæ* we may justly accuse George Sand, yet the *Histoire de ma Vie* remains to us the most complete, striking, and finished presentation of the development and progress of what we term the creative imagination. It is true that the four volumes contain so much besides, that it is not always easy to disengage the vital matter from the trivial. At times, also, the novelist's touch may be discerned, to the confusion of the facts; but this is not where the self-study is in question. The data are all given the reader, if he has but patience to sift them and to reject what is purely rhetorical and literary. What remains is of such value that one is at once reminded of M. Alfred Fouillée's admirable generalizations on the French mind: "Nous raisonnons plus que nous n'imaginons, et ce que nous imaginons le mieux, ce n'est pas le monde extérieur, c'est le monde interne des sentiments et surtout des pensées." In depicting this internal world of sentiment and thought George Sand is at her very best, and here she bequeaths matter to all time. Her heredity receives its full attention; she devotes an entire volume to her parents. The child of an aristocratic Napoleonic soldier, and of his mistress, — a woman of more than doubtful virtue and of the lowest antecedents, — she inherited a high degree of temperament, imagination, and vitality. Educated by her father's mother, the strongest efforts were made to overcome her mother's strain in her, to suppress what was lawless,

and to develop qualities of reason and of self-restraint. They apparently succeeded; at least until she was a grown woman she was sensible, quiet, *maîtresse de ménage*, a country châtelaine; and she then made a marriage which she expressly states was one both of reason and of affection. Yet when, later, she finally left her husband — an amicable break at first — to seek further education and experience in Paris, all this veneer and artificial restraint rubs off; she becomes her mother's child, adventurous, lawless, Bohemian, with the energies and insensitivenesses of the peasant type. This is one of the strongest cases extant showing the power of heredity over education. Imitation played no part in it; she is given to the grandmother at three years old; she sees her mother little, and only on short visits. Until she is well into her twenties, she sees and hears little that is not gentle, refined, conventional, austere. By the rigid upbringing of the old school, her heady temperament was schooled and controlled. Yet the relapse into the life of another class, when it came, was complete, nor is there a suggestion that she had sensibilities to be troubled or jarred. All the sentences in the life which deal with her mental and ethical qualities, are clear and comprehensive. She was a late-developing, dreamy girl, fond of music and of revery. Exceedingly healthy and spirited, she yet was not pretty, having only "un instant de fraîcheur et jamais de beauté." She was always wholly feminine, despite

later appearances; high-strung, excitable, loving beauty, color, luxury, jewels, and having all the tender piety of the naturally ardent young woman. Her talent from the first lay in observation of people and things. Of deep interest is her account of her first imaginative attempts. These took the form of improvisations, for she wrote late. She invented a childish religion, a god named by her *Corambé*, and even a ritual; she built an altar, before which she worshiped. *Corambé* was a gentle and beneficent woodland deity, the imaginative offspring of classic myths; and this part of the child's growth links her to the larger growth of equally childish, savage peoples. But she was not only a dreamer, she had active, practical ways; much frugal blood ran in her veins; as mother, as châtelaine, as business woman, she appeared competent and decided. Through all her life she owned a robust constitution; her children were borne with little pain; she hardly seems to know the meaning of fatigue. When she once begins to write, the pen is in her hand daily, hourly, incessantly. On the entire subject of her relations with men after her freedom, she is, as has already been remarked, nebulous, evasive, and literary. But to atone, there are those marvelous passages clothed in living, limpid style, in which her intellectual shifts and positions are laid bare to us; her religious development, her reading, her love of nature, her gayety, the possession of her imagination by a series of free, graceful, romantic,

high-colored figures — like some never-ending classic frieze. Surely, it is much to have this, even if we have not all; much to have a sketch of George Sand's head, even if we cannot possess a full-length portrait. The book is more worthy to be called *Truth and Poetry* than Goethe's; we are tempted to cry out: "Would that Goethe had given us as much!"

In the light of the *Histoire de ma Vie*, which might as truly have been called *Histoire de mon Imagination*, what has one to learn from similar self-expressions by other learned women? There are points of likeness in Madame de Genlis, who had the same passion for long, dreamy, imaginary dialogues. Mademoiselle de Chastenay reminds one forcibly of an English "blue"; she is as seriously and intelligently unimaginative as Harriet Martineau or Miss Cobbe herself. A fine exalted strain, on the contrary, runs through the delicate self-portraiture of Sonia Kovalevsky, whose mathematical ability never assisted her to intellectual serenity. Intellectual serenity, however, distinguishes such women as Madame de Staal-Delaunay in the midst of her galling servitude, as Madame Roland quietly facing death as she writes in her prison, as Catherine II beginning her curious confession with a characteristic syllogism to prove that her rise to power was the plain result of her qualities of character. Lack of personal morality does not seem to affect her intellectual morality — a state of things commoner by far with men than with women.

Tacitus, Montesquieu, Plutarch, Cicero, were her favorite reading; and in these memoirs it is possible to observe the formation of her extraordinarily lucid and positive mentality. When there is added to this serious study a remarkable prudence, and a steady observation of the life and characters about her, one is hardly surprised at the position maintained by such a girl at seventeen.

Intellect, as we see here, not only guides but creates a career. So it does with other women. No more forcible example could be cited of the power of intellectual development to make a life, than the case of Harriet Martineau. A querulous, deaf, ailing girl, barred from the natural life of her sex and age — this she was at the outset. And yet these two volumes form an inspiring study of vigor, usefulness, and optimism. The book is not delightful, but it is strong; a noble task, nobly executed. Harriet Martineau was one of those nervous, ill-nourished, and deaf children, who to-day would be the subject of special care. Instead of special care, she received special neglect; and was obliged to struggle along under the burdens of nervous dyspepsia and increasing deafness, until such symptoms became chronic. Her life, she declares, was full of fear; she longed to end it; and the sense of injury with which a maturer knowledge caused her to regard her parents' indifference, lends the account a tinge of bitterness. She knows, as we know, that she might have been greatly helped, if not cured.

Study did not early appeal to her, because of ill-health; but she was always courageous and methodical. Her earliest passion, she believes, was a love of money; she was affectionate and extremely jealous. The first healthy influence in her life is her freethought: "I found myself, with the last link of my chain snapped — a free rover on the broad, bright, breezy common of the universe." Once rid of the fatalistic view of her infirmity as a chastisement of God, she sets systematically and sensibly to work to understand and ameliorate it where possible; and, under "the deep-felt sense of progress and expansion," becomes cheerful and calm. Her enthusiasm for work is stimulating; her enjoyment in her translation of Comte is absolute. Long, tranquil, successful years of intellectual occupation are described; it hardly matters that her books are so little read to-day, when we know of the character they helped to build. She received definite sentence of death from her physicians. "I never passed," she comments, "a more tranquil and easy night"; and in this spirit she sits down to a full and conclusive self-analysis. No doubt such tranquillity helped to produce the respite which followed, for she lived on for twenty-one quiet and happy years. Setting her affairs in order, she enjoyed what she calls her "holiday"; and she ends with these words: "The world as it is, is growing somewhat dim before my eyes; but the world as it is to be looks brighter every day." Her religious tone towards the conclusion

of her life has an accent by which one is reminded of the comment made by Renan on Marcus Aurelius, that his religion was simply that "qui résulte du simple fait d'un haute conscience morale placée en face de l'univers."

# CHAPTER XVIII

## WORK AND AIMS

When a serious mind, stirred by the autobiographical impulse and guided by the autobiographical intention, turns to survey the field of investigation, it will observe three broad divisions of the subject. "As I stand above to look down upon myself," thus the thought may run, "I scan a country, various indeed, and full of natural whims and wonders; but capable of thorough survey if roughly blocked into three main divisions. My religious development, my emotional development, and my intellectual development, if properly proportioned and related, will give the main facts about me which it is necessary to know. To study these things in order, therefore, I will set myself, even if the rest must go. For when I have made plain my attitude toward religion, my emotional capacity and standards, my intellectual equipment and methods, surely it will not be difficult to determine the shape and color, as it were, of my personality."

This plan of the ideal self-student covers, in truth, all that is of undisputed value to the reader. There remain details of merely curious interest — the *rococo* of autobiography. The effect of the season and the weather upon Alfieri, his curious attacks of avarice

and generosity; Baron Holberg's remark that his enthusiasm for reform "invariably gave way to a few laxative pills"; Dumas' appetite; Baron Frénilly's boyish visit to Voltaire; Mrs. Eliza Fletcher's dislike of the sea, which she never willingly beheld, — trifles like these do help to make the person seem real and near. So does all that matter which is in a memoir yet not of it, those incidents, stories, and personalities which indirectly only concern the autobiographer. And who could forget them? That extraordinary Hare family, for example, as much the victim of omen and superstition in 1850 as Cardan himself in 1550. Mrs. Hare presents her child to a cousin with the remark: "Here is the baby, and if you should know any one who wants a child, please remember that we have others"! So we remember George Sand's mother; Thomas Day, as described by Richard Edgeworth; Colonel Meadows Taylor's Kiplingesque stories of Hindustan; and Madame Blavatsky, as painted by her devout disciple, Annie Besant. One is tempted to linger before this cabinet of curiosities, but after all, our chief affair in this chapter is with ambition and with work. To examine some considerable minds and methods seems in order, since we have already beheld the owners of them upon other business. And no other business, it may be suggested in passing, is quite so important, since such examination leads inevitably in the direction of the large question of genius in its rela-

tion to the normal life. Whether the adjective be used in the superb sense of George Sand's ringing sentence: "Man's ideal life is his normal life as he shall one day come to know it," or rather in the customary sense of the mean, becomes just here immaterial, since we aim at comparative suggestion and comment rather than at conclusive definition. No intellect, it should be borne in mind, can explain itself satisfactorily in citations for such a book as this, which can catch only the more salient aspects of its philosophy, direction, and *modus operandi*.

And here the field is so very wide, the number of examples from which to quote so large, the years covered by them so many, that we are forced to retrace our steps a little, and go over a part of the same route which we traveled in Chapters X and XI. The intellectual life of the world took its rise in the East; no comparative study of intellectual progress and attitude can be convincing which does not take account, first of all, of the Oriental mind and the Oriental learning; and clearly postulate the Oriental standpoint. It is for this reason that our scattered cases of Eastern self-study have waited until this chapter was reached to be considered *en bloc*. These examples are few, and scattered chronologically as well as geographically. For his part, Renan [1] appears to think it due to the fanaticism of Islam, that the vast body of Arabic cul-

[1] E. Renan, Preface to "Averroès."

ture and philosophy "was suppressed, as it were, almost instantly, without leaving a trace." Records of important persons, therefore, are fewer in number and less influential than those in occidental literatures. Carra de Vaux, in mentioning Avicenna's autobiographical fragment, observes that it was almost without parallel in Arabic literature. And it is especially significant that it has not as yet been wholly translated. Among the facts given by Avicenna are his extreme precocity, his passion for study, and his opinion (like Cardan) that in medicine, experience counted for more than rules. His candor on the subject of his difficulty in grasping Aristotle, has already been noticed. He shares in common with the other cases of Eastern self-study, a certain intellectual outlook, and standard. Such cases must be taken distinctly as individual and as sporadic, though conforming to the general principles governing autobiography.

The Emperor Timur especially declares that he was not a cultivated man. His conviction of the divine right of kings was deep and unshakeable, but it never excused, in his opinion, any mental idleness. His quickness in retort and his excellent verbal memory, are considered by him part of his equipment as a sovereign. His love of study was developed early, and increased by his high degree of energy and self-confidence. The *Baber-Nama*, or journal of the Emperor Baber, his descendant, is more fragmentary than the *Mulfûsat-*

*Timûry.* Baber gives his decrees and decisions, his study and estimate of his own resources, and those of neighboring countries. Poetry was his chief diversion, and he quotes many of his occasional verses. Less arrogant, less sure than Timur, he is more tolerant and more cultured. His example was in turn followed by his descendant Jahanghir, but the result gives us nothing.

It seems strange to us to find the Soudanese historian Abderrahman-Sadi-el-Timbucti, dwelling on the need for culture and for poetry. The same love and need breathes through the pages of Ib'n Khaldoun's autobiography. His studies are the only personal data furnished by this learned man. In his search for truth, the philosopher Al-Ghazzali shows a man whose uncertainties of temperament were gradually strengthened and steadied by the operation of his reason. "The thirst of knowing was filtered into me in the flower of my youth . . . There is no philosophy which I have not sounded; the search for truth is the end which I pursue." His constructive power of intellect carries him through a period of general doubt and despair, until his reason gains complete control; and he goes into retirement for purposes of meditation, tolerant, well-balanced and serene. The essential spirit here is of soundness and vigor, there is no fretful hair-splitting, no waste of energy. The case of Ali Hazin is fuller and more satisfying still, contained in one of the most illuminating documents which have come down to us.

The Sheikh Muhammed Ali inherited his love of letters from his father, of whom he draws a charming picture. In a library of over eight thousand rolls, most of them personally copied by this learned father, Ali passed his youth. At four years old he had "an extraordinary inclination to study." When eight years old he records: "From poetry my well-adjusted mind received great delight, and I was much given to compose verses." (These ages, we must not forget, to the earlier maturing Oriental, represent a stage of development which with us would be reached, respectively, at eight and at sixteen.) Soon he turns in the direction of philosophy and controversy, and plans a course of study which shows the utmost catholicity of mind. Personally, Ali is quietly optimistic. His investigations show him "a diversity of sublime truths." "Bestowing abundant diligence on this matter, I obtained the peace of mind which my means afforded." It is hard to communicate to the reader, secondhand, the inspiring effect of the Persian's attitude, so free from carping and complaining, so smiling towards his world. Physically, Ali was always fragile; and his studious ardor finally induced a sort of prostration. "In this strange condition the powers of my mind fell dormant; and the page of my memory becoming void of every particle of knowledge, presented a perfect blank. In this state I continued a whole year, at the end of which period my health returned." Treating this condition in a manner we now

believe most likely to cure it, Ali's family placed him to lie out-of-doors and be left absolutely alone. On his recovery, however, he becomes exceedingly anxious to retire wholly from the world; but his affection for his parents proves an obstacle to this plan. Ali is not only poet and savant, he is a naïf human creature. He never marries, because "celibacy was more suitable to my tranquillity and freedom." But he is very much in love at one time, when his poetical bent receives especial encouragement; odes and couplets in choice Persian arise from his "unsettled heart." Later in life, financial losses deeply vex him. "My inclination is to confer benefits and spread gifts among the whole human race," he writes; "with such a propensity, to live empty-handed is the most vexatious and disagreeable of all things." And he truly thinks it one of the worst of misfortunes, "to have the soul of the high-minded, and no power." In his quiet way he is somewhat vain, though, like Cardan, he dislikes the nervous wear and tear of visits and adulation. But he is neither a cynic nor a stoic; rather an observer and a philosopher. Poetry, treatises, critiques, and compilations, came steadily from his pen during health; and this biography is evidently intended as their supplement. He refuses to make it political, refuses to berate the turpitude of a government which exiled him to Delhi. His last words are: "With the firm foot of patience and toleration I have measured three and fifty stations of the uneven

road of life. . . . Now, weak and helpless, I sit listening for the note of departure." This seems in very truth a life mounted, in that unforgettable phrase, upon the "*edita doctrina sapientum templa serena.*" As we read, some wide prospect of brown and purple hills, clouds "shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind," sunlight falling upon the white temple on a distant slope, opens before us, and there this old man sits smiling.

Minor Arabic *mémoiristes* supplement the attitudes of these four. The author of the *Tarik 'è Soudan,* as we have seen, is merely an historian, writing in the first person, and with the verbosity and amplitude of simpler times. With similar amplitude and verve, Ousama gives us a picture of the Frankish crusader as he seemed to the Syrian Emir — a barbarian with neither intellect, sensitiveness, nor honor. The personal part of Ousama's autobiography is missing. The more modern case of Lutfullah has reached us really through the factitious interest inspired by the writer's sympathy with the conquering English, a sympathy very unusual in a Mahometan and a Munshi. The volume has slight importance.

Between the two great Arabian sages the comparison, as we have seen already, has been fruitful in revealing their prevailing attitude toward the intellectual life. The Sheikh, Ali Hazin, has received little consideration from the critics after this manner; but Al-Ghazzali, by reason of the weight of his body of philosophy, has not

been without his students and commentators from early days to the present. Similarity of his treatise, *Le Préservatif de l'Erreur*,[1] to Newman's *Apologia*, has been suggested, although the weight here lies with the Arabian; but more suggestive still, as Lewes[2] points out, is a comparison of its method and results with those of Descartes. Here both pursue the search for truth, the interrogation of dogma, and the construction of a fresh and novel method to reach these ends. In each case the impulse is intellectual rather than religious, in each case attainment comes after the first fretful energy is abated. Descartes' *Discours de la Méthode pour bien conduire sa Raison* is not a complete autobiography, although its study of intellectual development is planned in autobiographical form. Descartes, at twenty-three, a soldier in a German camp, becomes convinced of the illusory and unsatisfactory results of the philosophy of the schools. He had, he says, a love of letters, a particular enjoyment of languages and mathematics, but felt, as he puts it, that the "ancient moralists lead nowhere."

His attitude was conventional: "I revered theology and aspired to reach heaven; but I did not presume to subject revealed truths to the impotency of my reason." This belief — that the investigation of so-called inspired truths demanded an especial help from heaven —

[1] Translation of Barbier de Meynard.

[2] "Biographical History of Philosophy."

turned Descartes away from philosophy, and he writes: "Thus I gave up letters and resolved to seek no other science than the knowledge of myself, or of the great book of the world — to make myself an object of study, and to employ all the powers of my mind in choosing the paths I ought to follow." His retirement into seclusion is followed by the invention of a method which Descartes thought would lead to great truths by direct chains of simple reasoning; of which he proceeded to make immediate use in his *Meditations on the First Philosophy*. Descartes' words have an especial significance for us by reason of his avowed belief in self-study, his following out of Cardan's dictum, and also his failure to grasp the significant fact in the achievement of the Italian, namely, the inductive method. Whereas Cardan, reviewing under a careful classification masses of physical and mental data, furnishes us with all his material for inductive conclusions, Descartes undertakes his self-investigation in a manner completely *a priori*. But we have strayed for an instant from the main comparison. The case of Descartes, and the two Arabians, aids us in forming a clear conception of the difference between the Eastern and the Western philosophical attitude. The primary object of Descartes is to invent a method of reasoning by which philosophy of the schools may be simplified and clarified to meet the needs of the logician. On the contrary, it would seem that the Eastern mind is chiefly charac-

terized by its greater contentment with the purely abstract. Neither Ali Hazin nor Al-Ghazzali expresses the slightest desire to simplify existing systems of thought, or to bring the ideas which he pursues within the limits of concrete terms. To their imaginations, the first token of a man's intellectual power is his ability to remain without restlessness in the realm of pure metaphysics. The Western mind, on the contrary, may be equally powerful in its grasp of the abstract; but the sequence of philosophers and philosophies in Europe is sufficient to show that it has never rested wholly satisfied in this realm. The dicta of each new philosophy, the claim and ambition of each new philosopher, has been first of all to move from abstract to concrete, to clarify, to simplify, to use what has been thought. Dissatisfaction with metaphysics has led Western thought through philosophy to science. What returns there may have been made upon pure abstractions, have been for the especial purpose of clearing the ground for the fresh advance of classified knowledge.

The Oriental thinker has felt no such impulse; he remains at home in the realm of the purely abstract. He has undergone no such development, he has made no such advance, as the development and advance of Western thought from philosophical doctrines to scientific doctrines. One often hears the terms the "Eastern wisdom" the "Oriental philosophy," and it is at least interesting, if not useful, to pause for a moment

and consider what main difference is implied in these adjectives. Most of us will be found to mean just that contrast which lies between Descartes and Hume on the one hand, and Ali Hazin and Al-Ghazzali on the other: namely, the mind dissatisfied, or the mind satisfied, to move in a sphere of pure metaphysics.

Men like Al-Ghazzali and Ali Hazin possessed all the advantage to their development of an early, a definite, and an important aim. What an advantage this may be, is seen more clearly when it is contrasted with the vain chase for an object which has retarded, and even wasted, so many rich energies.

The self-education of Alfieri was accomplished only at immense loss of time and vitality, for the lack of a clear aim. Gibbon starts half-a-dozen separate tasks before he is gripped by the inspiration of the *Decline and Fall*. Goethe's observation: "I had a mind to produce something extraordinary, but in what it was to consist was not clear," records a very frequent prepossession of youth, though not usually justified by the production of a *Faust*. Philip Gilbert Hamerton, the essayist, for years pursued the career of a painter; and the didactic writer, Samuel Smiles, thrice changed his occupation before settling down to literature. Béranger, whose songs appear beyond dispute the outcome of a direct and definite lyrical impulse, never wrote a line until after a banking career, during which, and at the age of twenty, he had made over forty

thousand dollars. John Galt all his life regrets his success as a novelist, his failure in business. Sonia Kovalevsky began by writing fiction, and indeed never relinquished her ambition to be a novelist, even when her success in mathematics became assured. To Rousseau, his musical composition played a large part in his ambitions until he was a middle-aged man. Burns says: "the great misfortune of my life was never to have an aim."

Those persons are too many to quote, whose careers, whose talents, whose ambitions, have been wholly shifted and altered by some religious crisis. With certain natures it would seem as though their natural forces lay awhile dormant, awaiting a touch which should turn them into energy. Thus a lack of definite aim in youth means little, provided we are sure of the storage of power.

Yet there is witness after witness upon the other side. Never was there an instant in Haydon's boyhood when he did not intend to be a painter; nor in Cellini's, a sculptor; nor in Giovanni Dupré's, an artist. Goldoni entered at once and firmly into full possession of his powers; dramatic composition wholly satisfied and occupied his mind. The later English scientific men—Darwin, Huxley, Bain, Spencer—appear to have had clear-cut scientific aims almost from boyhood, although such an aim sometimes shifted in its particular form. Cardan and Stilling had similar experiences as struggling physi-

cians; after their first successful cures each one specialized. The early bent of some natures is remarkable. Cardinal Bellarmin preached at five or six on Jesus' suffering, and delivered his first public sermon at fifteen. Al-Ghazzali at nineteen, Avicenna at sixteen, Ali Hazin at twenty, Descartes at twenty-three, have been cited already as developed philosophers. At fourteen, Solomon Maimon was a full rabbi; Coleridge, a metaphysician; Sir Thomas Bodley, a graduate in Hebrew, Divinity, and Greek. At twenty-one, the last named delivered a Greek lecture. Both Catherine II of Russia and her friend the Princess Daschkaw plunged deep into historical and philosophical reading at sixteen. The Princess before fifteen had been influenced by Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Helvetius; and both of these women retained through life an ardor for such studies.

Lord Brougham, who, although he speaks modestly at eighty-three of his "enfeebled intellect and failing memory," yet undertakes a book in three volumes which shows little trace of failure, must have had an unusually long span of intellectual powers. At sixteen, he mastered the Binomial Theorem by induction, and read works on pure mathematics with pleasure.

Pierre Abélard, Herbert of Cherbury, and P. D. Huet were a trio of learned boys, while that curious person, Arminius Vambéry, was at sixteen a wandering gypsy who could speak six or seven languages. Beside this achievement, J. P. Richter's familiarity at nine years

of age with Latin and Greek seems slight. And we are less surprised that a small boy named Charles Babbage devoured books on algebra at night, and in secret.

Even if the religious vocation be considered as a thing apart from common aims and ambitions, it will be found to follow the same lines. There are as many examples of its early and definite manifestation as there are of its sudden appearance after conversion. If the reader will turn back to the section dealing with the religious confession, he will find that an early developed piety is almost always mentioned, notwithstanding later lapses, reactions, and backslidings, which occur before the final conversion is reached. The little Quakers almost without an exception were serious and devout children, although many of them later fell away. It is rare that we find a religious enthusiast or reformer who does not show symptoms of the force at work in him at the earliest possible age. It is rarer still to find such a religious enthusiast and reformer with the usual childish attitude of healthy indifference toward the subject of his soul's salvation. That element of moral education which is used by most parents and guardians in a manner wholly empirical, awaiting the child's maturity until its provisions be really understood, has now and again in the world's history reached, not careless ears and groping, ill-developed instincts, but a fully grown and highly sensitive perception, mature, active, constructive, already a giant. Thus Patrick, a boy

tending cattle in the fields, heard and answered the call to convert the heathen. Thus Bunyan, Fox, Guibert, Robert Blair, Henry Alline, Peter Cartwright, all were preoccupied with religious matters during their early childhood. Madame Guyon, at four, loved church and convent; we know how Teresa, at seven, played at martyrdom; and how Salimbene, a boy of twelve, entered the Franciscan order.

Augustin's peculiar tenets on original sin, and his disproportioned humility in describing his unconverted self, leave us no data on his childish attitude. But even in his sinful infancy he was occupied with his state, and, when ill, asked for baptism. The child Ernest Renan, the child Edmund Gosse, had acquired from their immediate surroundings a very pious hue of mind, which later changed its tint. Giordano Bruno graduated at fourteen in the humanities, logic, and dialectics; at fifteen he took the habit of a Dominican.

Leaving the religious type, we observe similar developments in John Flamsteed, Erasmus, and Edgar Quinet. Coleridge writes: "At a very premature age, even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics and in theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me. History and particular facts lost all interest in my mind. Poetry itself — yea, novels and romances — became insipid to me." This is a very unusual case, in direct contrast with general experience.

An early manifestation of the trend of a man's mind

is seen to be the rule rather than the exception; but we must not forget the exception. De Thou, Harriet Martineau, Heine, Leigh Hunt, Mark Pattison, Tolstoi, Georg Brandes, showed few signs of any particular predilections, developing slowly in all intellectual ways. The last did not care for any poetry until after twenty, which seems as old for poetry as Coleridge at fourteen seems young for metaphysics. Without a single exception, the soldier-autobiographers: Monluc, Sully, Timur, Marbot, Marmont, Lejeune, Lord Roberts, Lord Wolseley, Bassompierre, Trenck, Meadows Taylor, showed an early turn for military affairs; and the same turn for the drama may be read in the actor *mémoiristes*, from Clairon, Colley Cibber, and Macready, to Salvini, Ristori, Bernhardt, Mademoiselle Georges, and Ellen Terry.

Surely it is true that nothing is more suggestive than to observe the diversity of operation in that force we call talent. The comparison of its manner and effect, as noticed in these records, acts as a perpetual corrective to sympathy, and aid to perception. Intellectual understanding of the gifted human being has been woefully and proverbially inadequate, because each one has stood by himself in the eyes of his amazed or outraged *entourage*. Had it been possible to compare the case and symptoms of this genius, with another similar genius, both would have been stimulated and encouraged. We all know what it means to hear that the healthy

Mr. Jones had precisely our dyspepsia and sleeplessness last year; or, to use another instance, that Mr. Jones's son — that successful financier — was violently poetical, like our son, in his twentieth year.

The time is by no means wasted, therefore, which is spent in considering the aims, vague or definite, and the equipment, method, manner, and attitude toward work, set forth by the conscientious self-presentation. No help in the universal scheme can be compared to that which the intelligent and sensitive person obtains by seeing others succeed where he fails, or fail where he succeeds; and in this fact lies one of the reasons for the powerful influence of the autobiography over so many minds. Unquestionably, the self-student has realized this influence, and it has unconsciously guided him in classifying his material. When Cardan tabulated the condition of his health and nerves in his *Caput de Valetudine*, he was far from grasping the significance and importance of that action.

Education, which is to-day just beginning to take account in the schools of such conditions as myopia, retardation, and deafness, will no doubt in the future rely much on results from study of the relations of physique and mind. This will be found often in self-delineation, in the elucidation of certain personal eccentricities and abnormalities.

Roger North observed in himself "somewhat of confusion and disorder of thought" and an "aptness

to oversee [overlook?]", which he ascribes to "a cruel fit of sickness in youth." By this he insists his memory was permanently weakened. But he also, with a quaint frankness, believes this cause accounts for the reason why "I am not altogether so salacious as others of my family!" The frail physical health of de Thou, the historian, and Flamsteed, the astronomer, appears to have affected the rapidity of their work rather than their method or capacity; and the same may be said of Herbert Spencer, who could work only when alternating the labor with hard physical exercise. In three noteworthy instances, Alfieri, Giuseppe Giusti, and Leigh Hunt, horseback exercise alone made mental work possible. Alfieri, when he first began to ride, was on the borders of youthful melancholia; Giusti and Hunt had been dyspeptics. On the other hand a man like Bishop Huet found any exercise superfluous, and could remain in a chair studying for days without inconvenience. We all know Wordsworth's intense joy in nature, a consciousness of which with him preceded, accompanied, and followed any intellectual effort. Herbert of Cherbury preferred fencing and riding the great horse as recreations; which were healthier than the chess and dice that Cardan loved.

Although Catherine II had a certain taste for undignified pleasures, yet her health was preserved by her own exceptionally intelligent regimen, which extended to her constant, systematic mental occupation.

Rarely does a learned man openly profess his pleasure in taverns and brothels, as did Solomon Maimon, but then his life was one long irregularity. No doubt some such collation as Galton wished to make of facts concerning the *bizarreries* of poets and inventors, would bring to light many suggestive points upon this topic. At first sight variety seems to be infinite, so as to produce merely an effect of chaos. But this is hardly so if one looks closer; the most opposite intellectual types serve to illuminate one another, and to reveal essential qualities in common. There is Alfieri, who in youth confesses that he felt neither the inclination nor even the possibility of casting into verse his moods or his ideas; yet who, in middle life, wrote his *Alkestis* — "con furore maniaco e lagrime molte," with a maniacal fury and many tears. And there is the converse in Darwin's atrophy of poetical taste: "I tried lately to read Shakespeare and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me." The intention here is obviously not to contrast Darwin with Alfieri, a futile proceeding, but simply to point out two extreme types. Alfieri accompanies every stage of his mental development with emotion. What began with excitement over horses and amours, becomes, in study, a "bollare di mente," or a "delirar d'intelletto." Alfieri loved music, was always stimulated by it, and composed his tragedies after hearing it. When he undertakes to learn Greek, the task assumes the shape and color of a passion. He

is emotional from start to finish. But Italian poet and English scientist are alike in that each drove his intellectual machine with a deliberate effort of the will. The energy is controlled from the first moment by a hand upon the throttle.

There is a type in which the natural talent simply flows on, quick, limpid, easy, and unconscious. Dumas sat down at midnight, with a laugh, to write an act of *Henri III et sa Cour*, and finished it before daylight. Goldoni, pouring out comedy after comedy, sixteen in one year; George Sand, beginning a novel the day after she had finished one, with no sense of effort; these talents give forth from an inexhaustible well-spring. And there are those who can absorb in a manner equally passionate and unremitting, such as Erasmus. To such as these the life of the body is nothing. Thomas Platter, in order to study Hebrew, became a ropemaker at twopence a day; and to still the pangs of hunger chewed sand and drank salted water! Men like Arminius Vambéry and Solomon Maimon taught themselves to read the necessary languages by the aid of a second-hand grammar and a self-invented method. J. A. de Thou, Avicenna, Agrippa d'Aubigné, Madame Roland, Mill, Bellarmin, Bishop Huet, Herbert of Cherbury, Walter Scott, fed their intelligence with books, as one would stoke a furnace. Sir Walter, as a youth, deliberately read through a town library. Catherine II, when fifteen years old, read

every work of philosophy she could lay hand upon; John Flamsteed and Charles Babbage did the same in mathematics. Cardan was able to repair the deficiencies of his early education so rapidly that he himself thought it the work of a dæmon. Slower, but equally steady, "without haste, without rest," are such minds as Herbert Spencer, Ernest Renan, Alexander Bain, and William Wordsworth. In the last named, the actual acquirement of knowledge was somewhat desultory,

> "Many books
> Were skimmed, devoured, or studiously perused,
> But with no settled plan."

Wordsworth had Goethe's aspiration toward some great work, and indecision as to its form. The excesses of the French Revolution came as a shock to his enthusiastic mind; and precipitated the same crisis which we have already observed in Mill, in Al-Ghazzali, in Descartes, and in religious cases such as Augustin, namely, the doubt of reason. This is frequently caused by religious emotion, or connected with it, although not so necessarily. *The Prelude* is unusually clear and convincing upon this crisis in Wordsworth's case, and may be trusted as if it were not poetry at all, but rather scientific prose. Wordsworth calls "precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds," to the bar for examination; becomes "bewildered and distracted," and at last, "wearied out, yielding up moral questions in despair," begins to doubt the operations of

reason herself. In Mill and in Al-Ghazzali physical illness supervenes at this point: Wordsworth returns to nature for restoration. "This was the crisis of that strong disease," he says; and his recovery (not unlike Mill's) is due to revivifying emotion.

> "Thus moderated, thus composed, I found,
> Once more in man an object of delight,
> . . . . and from nature
> That energy from which he seeks the truth,
> From her that happy stillness of the mind."

Among poetical autobiographies, *The Prelude* is by far the most important. This form was more fashionable in early days; the *Prefatio* of Prudentius and the *Eucharisticos* of Paulinus of Pella have already been mentioned; the life of Gregory Nazianzen and Commodion's *Carmen Apologetica* are further examples. There is a *Carmen de Vita Sua* written by one Fervel in 1583; similar curious English poems, by Thomas Stapleton (1535–1598), by Thomas Tusser, and scattered, partially autobiographical cases, will occur to every reader. Professor Misch even includes Ovid's *Art of Love.* But *The Prelude* is the only work of the kind from which any data of real psychological value may be obtained. In spite of some fine passages, it is generally regarded as one of Wordsworth's failures; and justly, for scientific observation is not best clothed in blank verse. Whereas one may regret that Wordsworth did not see that the survey he wished to make of his own

powers, was a subject unfit for verse, yet there is much in *The Prelude* one would be sorry to have lost. On certain aspects of its writer's development it is strikingly lucid and suggestive; its clumsy verse is frequently set with vivid phrases of self-delineation. Above all, it permits us to link Wordsworth, at crises, with other great minds and temperaments.

Personal mood, governing the lyrical impulse, is no doubt responsible for the poetical autobiography. An artificial fashion, it was never greatly followed. Desire of self-affirmation and self-expression has usually chosen other forms; and this is to our advantage, since we are able to obtain more clearly our glimpses into the working of important minds.

# CHAPTER XIX

## GENIUS AND CHARACTER

Though the autobiography be the work of a considerable mind, it does not, by any means, follow that its revelations are the revelations of genius. Upon this most important subject, the data contained in autobiography must, of necessity, be limited and imperfect. As we have seen, the very impulse to self-study is more frequent among scientific minds and temperaments than among the poetic and artistic, whose self-affirmations are apt to take other forms. Since the particular idiosyncrasies accompanying what we call genius are generally more often displayed by its artistic and poetic exemplars, it follows that biography rather than autobiography has been the chief storehouse of these characteristics. Nor does it take genius to leave valuable autobiographical material. No one thinks of applying this word to Harriet Martineau, Mrs. Oliphant, Goldoni, Gozzi, Madame de Staal-Delaunay, Mademoiselle de Montpensier; yet they stand among great autobiographers, whose self-delineation is as important in its way as that of Rousseau, Alfieri, Cellini, Cardan. Lists in the appendix make it plain that, although such self-presentations of genius as these four, with those of Renan, Mill, Franklin, let us say, will always be among

the richer and more striking records, yet a large share of important matter may be obtained from the sober autobiographies of balanced and reasonable men and women of ability. One advantage of our preliminary survey of the whole field of autobiography, has been to dispel the impression that such work must needs be the outcome of restless egoism, or of a neurotic temperament, or of an unbalanced mind. From earliest times until the present, the body of revelation has been presented by persons who stand very near if not exactly *on* that elusive normal line; persons differing not greatly from ourselves in experience, or in ideals, or in circumstances, but in capacity and ability alone. Quintessentially normal people, if one may put it thus, — just a little *more so* in every respect than you and I; painted by nature in hues somewhat brighter; stored by nature with vitality somewhat higher; these, after all, are the persons with whom we have been made acquainted. It is their humor, and work, and attitudes toward marriage and religion, which have filled the preceding sections of this book. And the result, it is hoped, has been to establish relations of greater friendliness, intimacy, and understanding.

But just so soon as it is required to set apart from two hundred and sixty persons of ability, the particular records whose authors have been termed persons of genius, which are to be examined with a view to their bearing upon that perplexed term, — that instant the

whole attitude is changed. Curiosity and criticism replace sympathy and friendliness — a *rapprochement* appears impossible. Immediately, the reader seems to epitomize in his proper person the sentiment of a public; for, however capricious the world's attitude toward genius may be, however it fluctuates from condemnation to adoration, — whether it poisons Socrates, burns Bruno, grovels before Goethe, or bursts into tears on being introduced to Voltaire, — yet, in truth, it never hears the self-explanations of genius with patience. Those who stand close to genius are always anxious it should do the impossible. Their ideal is that of Ruskin's father: the genius-son should "write poetry as good as Byron's — only pious; preach sermons as good as Bossuet's, — only Protestant"! nor can the world ever understand why this should not be so. The attitude, psychologically speaking, is really the attitude of an audience at large: quick to applaud, to hiss, to admire, to excuse — to take any position rather than that of full understanding and equality. The sense of a difference, of being removed from the average, at once produces this attitude. For when we see the Thrales around Dr. Johnson, or the house-parties at Ferney, we see an audience pleased: and when we see Byron hounded out of England, Cardan and Galileo suffering the deepest humiliations, we see an audience displeased.

It is no waste of time to formulate these attitudes, since they appear to be so little understood by even

the theorists on this subject. The whole intricate question of the psychology of genius is further complicated by an absence of definitions. Up to the present, among the exponents of the pathological view, there has been stated no explanation of genius which explains, and no definition of genius which defines. The instances made use of by Professor Lombroso and his followers are simply those of *noted persons*, of all kinds, qualities and degrees of talent. A definition which includes Darwin, Cavour, Baudelaire, and Lesage under the same heading, must be as elastic as the tent of the fairy Peri-Banou. That all noted or prominent persons (causes for their prominence not analyzed) are insane; and that, in the cases like Darwin's, where they appear to be sane in every respect, the insanity is merely concealed, — this is the proposition of the pathological opinion. That such theory is wholly *a priori*, since the data to support it has not been taken from original cases and documents, but from hastily compiled and often inaccurate lists (like Trélat's), seems self-evident and susceptible of direct proof. The facts show what injustice is done when the theorist seeks far-fetched, rather than simple and natural explanations. Upon the testimony of a single and very doubtful witness, Richelieu is included by Professor Lombroso among epileptics; while upon a passing reference to an attack of giddiness — "for giddiness," says Professor Lombroso, very seriously, "is frequently the equivalent of epilepsy," — is

based the statement of the concealed insanity of Charles Darwin! To any open-minded reader of Darwin's *Autobiography*, such a passing symptom is quite simply explained in a man who suffered from dyspepsia, and led a sedentary life; and the observation points once more to that vicious custom of isolating single statements from the surrounding explanatory text. Such method has made monsters out of Rousseau, Cardan, Renan, and even John Stuart Mill; and where it prevails, the work done is rendered completely abortive.

Attention has already been called to the cases of "misinterpreted observation" in the *mémoires* of the past. It will not be forgotten how, in the section upon Religion, they were found to militate against those mystical philosophers who are so anxious for a compromise. There it was seen how the phenomena which seemed to be derived from a "something not ourselves," and which the subjects believed to come from a "something not themselves," embody, in nine cases out of ten, a simple, natural, physical explanation coiled up in each account of the facts. If the misinterpretation is to extend to the theorist and be perpetuated and exaggerated by him, then, indeed, will the work on the psychology of genius be retarded in its progress toward the goal of actual scientific value. If there is anything to be gained from the study of individual psychology, it can only be gained from a complete and thorough

examination, at first hand, of all the facts in *every case;* and to face that task our hasty generalizers appear unwilling.

No doubt the reasons for much of this prevailing misinterpretation lie in a lack of comprehension of the laws and principles underlying the self-study, since it is from self-study so much of the material must be gathered. The shallow generalizations on introspection have bred a lack of seriousness in the attitudes toward the data of introspection. In Section IV, on Sincerity, of this essay these attitudes have been considered, and it is precisely in respect to genius and character that they most frequently offend. But if much material on the subject may be taken from the autobiography, it cannot be the single and conclusive means to the study of genius. Far more than autobiography must be included to make such a study conclusive. Therefore, here we can do, perchance, no more than turn on such light as our self-students may throw into the darker corners of prevailing misconceptions. And one of the most frequent of these concerns the happiness and unhappiness of the intellectual life.

In his graceful book of essays on *The Intellectual Life,* Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton treats of the *ennui* of the scholar, the mental weariness, which has served the mediocre so often as an excuse for mediocrity. No really important mind, he thinks, has been without it, from Solomon to Schopenhauer; and he cites as special

examples Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron, who have left deep traces of such melancholy in letters, confirmed by the testimony of their friends. On the side of healthy optimism and cheeriness, Mr. Hamerton mentions the not inconsiderable names of Goethe, Cuvier, and Alexander Humboldt, and passes at once to generalization without pausing at the obvious point for comment. The poet, Mr. Hamerton might have suggested, is by the inherent nature of his inspiration subject to peculiarly violent reactions. The ebbing of that golden tide leaves the nervous force exhausted, susceptible to depression. While Goethe was yet a lyric poet, his letters to Frau von Stein show that even his vitality was not exempt; but he passed on to a further stage beyond the alternations of mood, and it is here that Mr. Hamerton makes use of him. The point is worth noting only because it has become part of a general opinion, which has even given birth to certain special theories respecting the intellectual life as the abnormal, unhealthy, ill-balanced life. Observation of this particular and undeniable tax on the nervous force of the talented or intellectual creature, has assisted the Lombrosian theories of genius as a neurosis, as a disease. The melancholy of the scholar has been used as the fundamental argument against the idealist. If a young creature is found to have a touch of ambitious *malaise*, the modern custom puts him at once through a hygienic course of banking. That the weary cry of Ecclesiastes

strikes the critical ear much more as the lament of an exhausted sensualist than as the depression of the true student, does not affect the hasty modern position. That wail has been responsible for many erroneous ideas respecting the learned professions.

On such a question as the happiness of any given person, it is surely more convincing to hear speak the person himself. Testimony as to the health and happiness of the intellectual life is so overwhelming in its abundance, that the difficulty lies in the choice. In other types of energy, or in other sides of the same subject's activity, there may be a frequent note of satiety, disillusion, disappointment. Politics, war, finances, society, sovereignty, exploring, police-detection — what you will; or Lord Brougham, Monluc, Madame d'Oberkirch, Vidocq, Timur, or Catherine II,— to become more concrete, — each one at moments shows himself disgusted, weary of the game. It is just because it is a game, — this practical life so extolled to-day, — that men do grow weary of it. But his canvas never failed to interest Haydon, nor his furnace Cellini, nor his great folio Cardan or Huet, nor the infinitely little variation Darwin, nor the infinitely vast definition Spencer. Perhaps the reader does not think it convincing to cite such men as Ali Hazin or the learned Maimon, because these are singly devoted to letters; nothing else tempts them. Let him rather hear a more complex type, a man of the world, to whom appealed

also the busy life and the exercise of power. Lord Clarendon especially remarks that the happy parts of his life were before and after his political career, while he had leisure for "exercitations" of his own. Ib'n Khaldoun echoes the very thought of Clarendon, when he, too, was occupying the highest position a Sultan could bestow. Herbert of Cherbury, Ambassador to France, was a distinguished courtier, a renowned swordsman, horseman, and dancer. "I ever loved my book," he testifies, "and a private life, more than any busy preferments." The legal life of Sir Symonds d'Ewes had much in common with a business man's life to-day; but his content was not in his successful, if harassing, worldly career. "So my very study . . . grew more delightful and pleasant unto me"; and, again, "Having followed my study reasonably closely . . . I found much content by it." He is lifted out of the grief for his children's death. "To mitigate and moderate this sorrow," he beautifully says, "I fell close to my sweet and satisfying studies." The sincerest note in Kenelm Digby's rhapsodical *Private Memoir* is his love for the life of books. The gay and charming Baron de Frénilly, true type of the polite Frenchman of the world, vouchsafes: "Je travaillais comme on respire, la diversité de travail en faisait pour moi le repos." Poetry and study formed the chief features of his existence. Carlo Gozzi, despite his cynical humor, became serious in describing "those literary tastes to which I

have always clung . . . and which, now that my hairs are gray, will be my solace to the end of life." Anthony Trollope, miserable in a clerkship; and Béranger, unhappy, though successful, in a bank, are converse pictures. "I was always in trouble, I hated my work," says the former; and, later: "I trust for my happiness still chiefly to my work [writing]; and lastly to my books." As for Béranger, his ambition was to "live alone and to compose verses at my leisure." Further, let us read the particularly significant sentences in which he speaks of the general effect upon his character of his development as a poet. "My spirits became more serene," he says; "fits of melancholy disappeared. I saw men as they are. My gayety, which had been unequal and boisterous, became calm and sustained." These are words we shall have cause to remember.

A successful English merchant, Samuel Roberts, a distinguished English barrister, Sir Samuel Romilly, take in study their chief delight. A shrewd manufacturer, like Charles Bray, finds his taste for books so repaying that he winds up his business in order to have more time to give them. These are not shy, solitary persons, but men whose lives offered them the choice of varied worldly occupations, and who yet found more freedom and satisfaction in the secluded atmosphere of the library.

Already in these pages we have heard testify, if only by inference, some of those personalities on whom the

world's contact grates and jars, — the morbid, the impressionable, the hypersensitive; to whom intellectual occupations hold the key of health and sanity. Miss Martineau, Madame de Staal-Delaunay, are instances. Alfieri terms his first sonnet "Liberazione Vera." He carries out later and repeats this idea of freedom: "La passione dello studio e la necessità di essere o di farmi libero per poter essere intrepido e veridico autore."

The composition and study of Persian verse was to the Emperor Baber his great compensation for the cares of government. Over and over again, like a theme in music, the self-tortured Egerton Brydges repeats his one happiness: "My misfortunes have far exceeded the common lot of humanity and my wrongs have exceeded my misfortunes," he exclaims with bitterness; but he has kept "a passionate and undebased love of letters." On every page of his two volumes, otherwise painful reading, this love, this ideal is displayed. Passages of rich and striking beauty follow upon querulous complaint, but at the end he is more tranquil: "I have touched upon my latter days, and I have passed through a wilderness of thought. Of late I have been almost an entire recluse; I am calmest and happiest in solitude."

The late and slow development of a diffident youth like Mark Pattison is saved from distortion and regrettable errors by what he calls his "restlessness of the critical faculty . . . and daily converse with the poetry and literature of all time." Similar influences

save Edgar Quinet after a sentimental crisis. Wordsworth, passing from a love of nature to a love of books, preserves the two to his tranquil and dignified old age.

But for pure exultation of happiness Pierre Daniel Huet, Bishop of Avranches, stands chief among savants. A fragile man and frequently ill, he protests: "From this unabating love of letters and perpetual occupation in my studies . . . I have derived this benefit—that I have never felt that satiety of life, that weariness with all its objects, of which other persons are so often heard to complain." Later he is more specific: "No protraction of study has ever given me a sense of fatigue or languor. I have always, after six or seven hours without intermission spent over my books, arisen from them fresh and cheerful, sometimes in high spirits, singing." Of what other occupation in life could this be said? What kept the flame of vitality and cheerfulness alight in such suffering bodies as those of Cardan, Giuseppe Giusti, Heinrich Heine, John Flamsteed?

The utter destitute poverty of Thomas Platter was made bearable to him because he was learning Hebrew. The Abbé Morellet, both nervously injured and financially ruined by the French Revolution, wished to protest the one truth: "Je veux parler du secours inestimable, incroyable, que donnent dans le malheur les études littéraires, et l'habitude d'appliquer fortement son esprit . . . Surtout en écrivant beaucoup j'ai trompé mes malheurs." Baron Holberg asserted:

"There is little misfortune which literature cannot in a measure alleviate"; and Lord Campbell: "My reading has supplied me with a never-failing occupation, and lent a charm to my existence in every stage of my progress." Leigh Hunt, during imprisonment, was quite happy because of the uninterrupted opportunity for study; and Gibbon, in summing up his fortunate career, dwells on his happiness: "The love of study, a passion which derives fresh vigor from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual source of independent and rational pleasure." Now Gibbon is classed by M. Fouillée among the *lymphatics* — temperaments incapable of the higher degrees of feeling and emotion; and this is a temperament found more often among men of business and active life than among lovers of books. Yet anyone will notice how much more keen is the note of Gibbon here than where he speaks of other occurrences in his life — he actually makes use, for instance, of the word *passion*. Much the same note of intensity and enjoyment is sounded by Descartes in speaking of his study of mathematics, poetry, and philosophy; by Count Cesare Balbo of mathematics alone. To these examples of extreme passion, Renan adds the fact that mathematical combinations caused him to dream by night and by day. The hours spent in study were the only ones in which Wilhelmine of Bareith and Leonora Christina of Denmark were able to forget their inferior and brutal sur-

roundings; had such hours been longer, Wilhelmine would have been a less embittered woman. Sir Thomas Bodley tells us, with tranquil happiness, how he set up his staff "at the library door in Oxon," where indeed it would seem as if a little cloud of that happiness had clung, like some subtle perfume, ever since. Agrippa d'Aubigné contrasts the peace of his study with the distracting disappointments of the Court; while two famous Italians, Petrarch and Vico, asked nothing more of life than the health and leisure to spend the remainder of it with the only friends who never betrayed them. When Vico lays down the pen, and bequeaths his manuscript of the *Nuova Scienza* to a friend, he inscribes it with a little epitaph, as if erecting a tombstone over his happy work; and all Petrarch's tissue of brilliant vanities seems willingly laid aside for that tranquillity of soul, wherein he shows himself "without noise, without wanderings, without anxieties, always reading and writing and praising God."[1] Such women as Madame Roland, Madame de Genlis, Mademoiselle de Chastenay, share the happiness given by a life of study; and to the first it seems even to have replaced the ordinary feminine satisfaction of the emotions. Mademoiselle de Chastenay, on the contrary, avows her life to have been lonely, although she adds: "L'étude m'a comblée de ses jouissances; mon

[1] "Pur tranquillo nell' anima, senza romori, senza divagamenti, senza sollicitudini — leggendo sempre, e scrivendo, e lodando Dio."

goût pour toutes les directions de l'esprit a accru chaque jour d'avantage." Since woman is so sensitively poised in regard to what brings her sorrow or joy, all that female autobiographers have to say on the subject is of interest; and a comparison of their experiences on this point at least sounds encouragement for the future.

As we look back over these quotations, surely weariness of intellect is not the prevailing note; on the contrary, there seems to be present in them, as a whole, a peculiarly vital freshness of interest. No doubt the scholar's sense of his superior and recondite joy has lent him an irritating aspect of patronage. His passing moods of inadequacy and humility at falling short of his ideal, have then been gratefully seized upon to contrast with the fatuous and empty gayety of the world. Thus tradition has been opposed to tradition without encountering the corrective of thought. Not that your intellectual and creative life is necessarily a tranquil one. Mill's education was dangerous to happiness, yet Mill's life was happy, if not tranquil. The strain between the intellect and the temperament of Sonia Kovalevsky interfered with her peace and her happiness. There is a price to be paid for every joy. If Darwin regrets he cannot read Shakspere, yet he has no moment of ennui during scientific observation. Uneven temperaments like Cardan's and Rousseau's must suffer; yet the splendid force of the Italian is untouched by intellectual satiety, and the only peace in the

troubled movement of the *Confessions* is when Jean Jacques is steadily at work.

One could go on, if it were necessary, and give converse examples, showing the unhappiness of those who might have shared these pleasures and who chose other paths; but little is to be gained. The cry of satiety, of the vanity of knowledge, does not come from the intellectual man; it is a catch-word to bolster up the slothful and the inadequate in his slothfulness and inadequacy; it is based on observation, not of the great, original mind, but of the little, imitative mind. No doubt the third-rate have moments of intellectual weariness unknown to a Goethe or a Humboldt. We may be sorry for them and ourselves, yet we must be candid and meek. Our misfortune it may be that we cannot partake of this privilege — these joys, which alone outlive the loss of health and friends, the loss of place and money. The intellectual life holds the only enduring and vital happiness which humanity is like to know, since

> "Beyond this place of wrath and tears,
> Looms but the horror of the shade."

And if through the expression and operation of their genius so many persons draw happiness and health, what is the commentary on genius itself? And where the development of a man's genius brings to bear upon his life and character a steadying, tranquilizing, constructive influence, how can genius be regarded as a neurosis?

The Lombrosian theory has drawn its chief support from consideration of those eccentricities so often attending on genius. Misconception of the psychology and functions of the self-study has served to accent and emphasize such data as the Lombrosian theory obtained; which misconception, if avoided, or even if merely reconsidered, must have led to a total readjustment of the theory to meet the facts.

Both Ribot and Grasset point out the failure to take into account those positive cases where, as we have shown, the operation of genius has resulted in the subject's renewed health of mind and body; or those negative cases where intellectual superiority in no way tends to lead a rational person away from his rationality. Both have been cited in this chapter; for clearness it may be best to repeat that Miss Martineau, Alfieri, Béranger, Petrarch, would be types of the first group; Franklin, Gibbon, Renan, Scott, Goethe, of the second. Béranger's statement is unequivocal and definite, as we have just read. Such a man as Edward Gibbon, working with regularity and method, is as far as possible removed from eccentricity or abnormality. Franklin's education of his powers showed a system and persistency which is the very soul of health. In truth, Franklin's genius lay in his capacity to pass steadily onward in everything he undertook, from the primer to the text-book, as it were, stretching out his powers, little by little, until they covered the ground. The same progressive

advance is found in Renan, in Herbert of Cherbury, in Petrarch, in Descartes, in Al-Ghazzali. An assemblage of testimonials to the happiness of these subjects has at least this significance, that their happiness carries with it the connotation of freedom and normality. And since, as Ribot has noted, and we have read with conviction, the exercise of the intellectual and artistic faculties appears to be the only form of happiness with some persons which is persistent and keen enough to perpetuate itself upon paper — it follows that a high degree of freedom and normality must have been present in those perpetuated moments of happiness. Perhaps the key-note of the life may have been bitterness and sorrow, as when we close the record of Berlioz or of Brydges; yet it is impossible not to see that the bitterness and sorrow have been due to forces of temperament working against and not with the genius of the subject. If therefore the manifestation of talent in its highest form, which we term genius, has been found to lead to uninterrupted happiness in some cases, — to their only moments of happiness in others, — what right have we to regard the possessors of this genius as diseased, neurotic, abnormal, because of that possession?

The alienist tells us that the very first effect of mental or nervous illness is to disturb the sense of tranquillity and joy. Fear, alarm, melancholy, distress, these are among the first tokens that something is wrong. Save in rare cases of a particular delirium, anything approach-

ing natural, healthy joy is unknown to the insane, and anything approaching serenity of mind is absolutely impossible. Religious insanity may bring instants of ecstasy, but these are invariably followed by long reactions of fear and melancholy, and tranquillity is conspicuously absent in the religious fanatic. This is strikingly perceived in the case of Suso, the joy and tranquillity of whose early and normal religious feeling give way, step by step, to the gloomy and morbid horrors of religious mania.

If the question of happiness in the intellectual life thus has its bearing upon genius, the question of character goes at once to the very heart of the matter. Lombroso dogmatically states that "geniuses have scarcely any character," and he quotes the self-accusations of Cardan and Rousseau as a proof of their lack of character. To us, who have just read that admirably-balanced and dignified paragraph in which the first psychologist presents his errors and virtues for our study, starting with the remark that no subject is more difficult of comprehension — this sweeping assertion brings amazement and incredulity. As to Rousseau, indeed, he may be handed over to Professor Lombroso, yet the only character Rousseau seems to have shown has been directed to self understanding in the *Confessions*. If by character is meant the power by which we control and regulate the forces and instincts of our temperament and heredity, it appears to be often as much a

part of genius as genius itself. When Goethe, who was nervous at high places, deliberately cured himself by ascending steeple after steeple, he displayed character. When Alfieri bound himself to a chair to break an unworthy passion, the means seem to us violent, but the act showed character. Who could have undergone in Heine's way, the incredible tortures of his mattress-grave, but a man of high character? The attacks of pain borne stoically for many years by the great Earl of Shaftesbury, the military service undergone at the call of duty and patriotism by the infirm Giuseppe Giusti, the youthful fortitude of Massimo d'Azeglio, do not these things display character? Do every-day persons of no ability and ideas show more character in the conduct of their lives, and in adversity, than did such scholars as Thomas Platter, such students as the brothers Chambers, such a man as Walter Scott, such famous women as Lady Fanshawe, as Leonora Christina, as Catherine II, as Margaret of Newcastle, as Madame Roland?

Fouillée's view that intelligence is an essential factor of character, seems to the reader of autobiographies wholly convincing. The conquest of self, if difficult even with intelligence, is impossible without it; your stupid and dull person lacks character, though he may be tenacious and obstinate. To the instances quoted of strength of character, Fouillée adds those of Dr. Johnson and Harriet Martineau, epitomizing their two

cases with a distinction of phrase which must be repeated: "Nés avec un tempérament mélancolique, ils étaient des attristés. . . . Mais, par leur intelligence et leur volonté, ils firent un noble tentative pour triompher de leur tendance organique au découragement. . . . À la mélancolie du tempérament ils ont opposé la sérénité du caractère."

If an autobiographer of importance (genius, Professor Lombroso would call him) possess happiness in work and strength of character, it would not seem easy to find the materials to manufacture a lunatic out of him. Questions of hallucination, of special eccentricity in personal habits, need to be somewhat more closely scrutinized than heretofore, ere they can upset so solid a basis. For example, the visions of Cardan, of which Lombroso and Lelut make so much, we have seen to be precisely those common to high-strung children the world over; his impotency becomes on close examination merely a youthful dread of impotency, while the buzzing of voices in his ears is plain "misinterpreted observation" of conditions produced by anæmia and catarrh. The whole structure of the theory of his madness crumbles when the facts are examined at first-hand; and all that is left is a certain repetition and wandering of style in the *De Vita Propria*, surely not unaccountable in a man writing at seventy-five — who did not live to revise his work.

To what theory, therefore, on the subject do these

records add their weight? It is useless to repeat in this book the examples which by their mere morbidity, eccentricity, or abnormality, seem to support the Lombrosian view. But, as M. Joseph Grasset [1] points out in a recent and valuable work, unless an explanation covers all the facts, it does not explain. He states as his opinion that, "scientifically, one thing only is demonstrated, and that is: the frequent coexistence of intellectual superiority and a neurosis in the same individual"; and later makes the statement: "Genius is not a neurosis, but a neurosis is more often the penalty of genius."

The line between normal and abnormal in the intellectual life is one perpetually in dispute; and a more general and thorough study of important individuals is necessary before it can be established. Only then will it be possible authoritatively to do that which Grasset declares is his purpose: "To study and point out the relation in which intellectual superiority stands to nervousness, to show the existence and the true nature of this relation, and to define the position of the abnormal intellectual superiority in the neuropathic family." [2]

Then, perchance, it will be easier to answer such a question as Ribot asks about the significant figure of Goethe, a question, by the way, which is not answered by the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*. "On a souvent cité

[1] "Le Demi-Fou." [2] Ibid.

Goethe," says the psychologist,[1] "comme une belle exemple de pondération et d'équilibre; mais est-ce un génie ou un caractère?"

By his misconception of the value of self-study, Goethe has deprived us of an opportunity to see at work the high powers of a complex, well-balanced modern man, and this is indeed a deprivation. But at least his record sounds the dominant notes of happiness and health. Many prevailing impressions of the uneven temperament and nervous reactions of the intellectual worker, have been taken from letters and diaries, wherein, as we have read, the fugitive mood is apt to become exaggerated in crystallization. The total impression alone should count, — the sum total of such moods brought under the corrective influence of the autobiographical intention. And to receive such collective impression needs more receptivity, more open-mindedness, than the reader of these documents has generally been willing to give them.

In M. Fouillée's *Tempérament et Caractère* (from which it has been a delight to quote), the author mentions that Auguste Comte wished to enrich psychology by a series of monographs on men of special and remarkable aptitudes, and had already commented on their enormous variety. The work is worthy of a broadly generalizing mind. Doubtless in reading such studies it would be not so much the special aptitude

[1] "Psychologie des Sentiments."

of the person which would repay us, as the revelation — to quote M. Fouillée once more — of "le véritable caractère de la personne, sa vie consciente et volontaire, la manière dont elle réagit sur sa nature par son intelligence et sa volonté."

And it is this after all, first and last, for which we turn to the autobiography. Our interest in the mathematical faculty of Cardan is not the main interest of *De Vita Propria*. The description of Cellini's bronze casting, of Babbage's calculating machine, of Rafaello da Montelupo's curious gift of left-hand drawing, of "l'aptitude singulière de me grimer" of Eugène Vidocq — these are not the chief things for which we look into their lives: it is, first of all, for "the real character of the person." And secondly, I think it is their happiness or unhappiness which moves us. We are idealists in the main. The whole trend of the modern attempt to analyze, to comprehend the phenomena of religion, the phenomena of genius, is but an indication of our idealism. We seek in these records a warrant for our admiration, a support to our ambition, or even a valid excuse for our sloth. We wish to be able to point to some great and successful exemplar in the intellectual life.

And some of us think that we have but to look, — that we do not need to regard ourselves as unbalanced, neuropathic, or diseased, because we feel beating within our soul the wings of some uplifting inspiration.

It would rather seem to bear us to higher airs of health and happiness. And so, where we close the final pages of some faulty, noble life, we catch an echo of its exultation, and are able to exclaim, with a distinguished Frenchman: "Heureux ceux qui dans la triste époque où nous vivons, ont pu se dégager des médiocrités qui nous entourent; qui se sont fait, dans les pays enchanteurs de l'antiquité, à quelques pas du Parthénon et du Colisée, ou dans les régions sereines de la science pure, un coin de terre bénie, où n'arrive pas le bruit des luttes stériles; et qui poursuivent, dans le silence et la paix, l'étude des grands questions qu'ils ont entrepris de résoudre." [1]

[1] Gaston Boissier.

# CHAPTER XX

## CONCLUSION

The two hundred and sixty capital autobiographies which form the basis of the foregoing study contain many characteristics which must escape classification, many riches a general survey must needs omit. To urge the reader to the volumes themselves must be, therefore, a final task. Choice for another is at all times ungrateful; if this book does nothing else, it may at least provide investigators with a list of considerable autobiographies to which they may turn for much material hitherto difficult of access. Such ideas and aims have caused us perforce to neglect the literary aspect of many of these writers; and when one comes to cast a backward glance over beloved pages, this may seem a neglect indeed. What storied wealth, what unforgettable passages have delighted us, have rewarded our daily task! What creative, constructive criticism from Goethe, at whom we have too much cavilled! What pages of delicate and glowing description from Renan and Marmontel! The high imaginative beauty in the devotional outbursts of Augustin and Teresa opened to the fervent readers of the past depth upon depth of radiance and ecstasy. Sentences there are in these records, and paragraphs, and incidents,

which have become the possession of all time. No epic has given more of a thrill than Monluc in battle: "Le capitaine Carbon, qui n'estoit point armé, ayant esté auparavant blessé d'une arquebuzade au bras gauche, vint à moy et me dit ces mots: 'O Monluc, mon amy, pousse hardiment, je ne t'abandonneray pas!'" There are battles too of another sort; with the same stress of emotion we turn Mrs. Oliphant's last wonderful page. The memory is crowded with pictures. Some we have tried to draw within this book, but there are others: Salimbene's father vainly imploring the young mystic to return home; Jerome Cardan pleading for the life of a wretched son; Ousama ib'n Mounkidh and the Frankish crusader; Alfieri writing his first sonnet in the darkened bedroom of his mistress; Marguerite de Valois tending the Fosseuse, — pictures which serve to show us as nothing else, how between the past and present "there is a great gulf fixed."

There are words, too, unforgotten, gorgeous in quotation. "Midsummer, like an army with banners, was moving through the heavens," writes De Quincey; and similar splendor lingers in Egerton Brydges, some of whose phrases do not deserve entombment with what is dead in his two volumes. "All our feelings and buried ideas instantly respond to them [the great poets] like the strings of an Æolian harp to the breeze. They have a transparency and native fire which lights up all the

slumbering and cloudy figures of our brains, and gives an instant glow to the currents which circle around the heart." Too much of patchwork is there, perhaps, in this sort of citation; and yet Brydges has a love and enthusiasm for literature informing all his utterances on the subject, which are a perpetual inspiration in themselves. "Words," he says, "are unstudied breathings from the fire of the imaginative power. . . . I never look upon the face of the earth and skies without a sense of deep, mysterious impressions, which I feel a longing desire to discriminate and embody in language." Perceptions so delicate and so purely literary as these arise, Brydges thinks, from "a flow of high feeling casting its colors upon a richly-stored mind," and are equalled but rarely; hardly even by George Sand or Rousseau. They come upon us with fresh vitality and suggestiveness, as forming part of a necessary equipment of taste. Such criticisms as may be found in Colley Cibber, or in Lord Clarendon's sketch of his friend Ben Jonson, or in the estimate of Dr. Samuel Johnson by men so dissimilar as John Ruskin and Egerton Brydges, cannot but be inspiring to the critical faculty.

But, after all, one must not choose a reader's pleasures for him, since the first pleasure of all is liberty of choice. He will like us while he roves at will, and if he knew it all before, surely he will like us even better. To glance over, to repeat again, the striking passages and vivid

pictures in our library of autobiographies is impossible here, yet it might have one advantage; for it would serve to emphasize and renew that hope of friendliness, with which we beguiled you in the beginning. As it is, however, we have done by the way of an introduction all one may; the further intimacy lies with you. There is the crowded bookshelf, and there your friend awaits you.

At the very outset of this study its object was declared to be mainly suggestive, rather than conclusive. Human nature resembles a work in many volumes, of which the earlier are lost and the latest are unpublished. No honest observer of personal records but would hesitate to draw hasty inferences from such material; and he would be dull, rather than dishonest, if he were not overwhelmed with their wealth of suggestion. But, as was said in the introductory chapter, in spite of all tentative openmindedness, during the progress of this work certain conclusions were, of necessity, forced upon one. The facts have drawn them; the writer seems rather to become the passive spectator of an orderly marshaling of data; and these data are general as well as concrete. The whole subject of introspection is peculiarly liable to misconception. Although an understanding of subjective tendencies lies at the very root of an understanding of literature, yet no subject is less comprehended to-day. The ground about it needs to be cleared, and the vague, prevalent ideas to

be classified and brought to book. Our witnesses are treated much as witnesses in a court of law, and we, as jury, may draw our own conclusions. If such conclusions have not been drawn hitherto, it is because the whole subject of a man's attitude toward and understanding of himself is a subject unresolved and undefined, relying hitherto not upon authority, but upon the chance theory, the passing prejudice of the sciolist. And, pending an examination of the field by an authority, it will be well to restate those conclusions to which our present survey seems to point.

Beginning at the beginning, the indication is plain that a subjective trend of thought made its appearance in literature, rather suddenly than slowly, during the first three hundred years of the Christian era. Examination of its early manifestations shows the primal cause to be religious emotion: for the second type of the subjective document — that is, the scientific — did not make its appearance until the sixteenth century. These are facts demonstrated by history.

When one turns to the documents themselves, an investigation begins most naturally with a comparison of the reasons for writing them, and of the attitude they take, with like attitudes in diaries and in letters. Results of such comparison force upon us the conviction that the obscure and deep-seated psychological condition which produces the incitement to serious autobiography produces also a governing power in the mind of the self-

portrayer, which we have termed the *autobiographical intention.* Works written according to the autobiographical intention are written "as if no one in the world were to read them, yet with the purpose of being read." Conformation to this standard permits us (always within recognized limits) to believe in their sincerity, and to trust their information. Cases apparently contradicting this statement will be found, on closer inspection, to be usually cases of "misinterpreted observation," of which the conversion-ecstasy of Robert Blair, the halo of Cellini, the tutelary genius of Cardan, are prominent examples. Finally, the law of the subjective self-study is seen to be that its manifestations invariably precede and accompany movements of intellectual significance; and that, conversely, in times when great warlike activities and political upheavals make their special demand upon the objective energies of a people, the subjective record diminishes in proportion, or wholly disappears from literature. Such are the observations to be made after a survey of the autobiography in its more general aspects; and this definition of them enables the reader to form a clear idea what the documents are which he is about to approach, and what causes and laws regulate their particular characteristics. The section on *Groups,* moreover, examined together with its Appendix, endeavors to give some conception of the part these documents may be permitted to play in sociological and historical investigation.

Passing on to the chapters dealing with the cases themselves, they must be taken as merely suggestive to the specialist of what may be found to do in this field. Few inferences can be made within the scope of these pages. It has not been uninteresting to note that the first memory in healthy childhood appears to be always of an object or group of objects; whereas, if the child be abnormal or unhealthy, this memory is invariably of a state or states of consciousness. The attitude of the sexes toward each other and the position of woman, will be found to have changed much less than attitudes toward nature, and toward humor, and toward society at large. That the prevailing feature in the intellectual life is its *happiness*, strikes pleasantly upon the mind, and leads the reader to dissent from the pathological theories of genius. Finally, to point out that the study of religious confession has been, up to the present, based upon an *a priori* method, wholly illusory and misleading, is a duty which must not be shirked. Not until the religious self-presentation be scrutinized in its entirety, and especially in its relation to the scientific and philosophic self-presentation, can anything of value be drawn from it. This will be the life-work of some future investigator of exceptional patience in ferreting out unclassified and uncatalogued material, as well as of reserve in withholding his results.

Such work, perhaps, may not be done till more serious autobiography has been written. For men, like chil-

dren, ape one another; and there is nothing in the world so inspiring as the relation borne by the powerful autobiography to literature and to life. Men bequeath their outworn heads and bodies to science for the good of posterity; why should they not so bequeath their living brains and souls? Each of us is a potential autobiographer; to each of us come inner and outer experiences which may be the parent of great imaginations yet unborn. Thus, even in another sense, "our thoughts are as children born to us which we may not carelessly let die." Men take down with them hourly into the grave their radiant visions of the morning and cloudy visions of the night, thus depriving us of our precious heritage of aid and understanding. For we, who remain, have a right to know what has passed with those who have gone before. Whether expressed in Pope's crisp accents of command: "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan," or in the vaguer phrases of Browning's *Cleon*, this right is acknowledged, and must not be frightened out of us by any bogey-talk of introspection. Knowledge is good, healthy, and religious: a love of truth and of their fellow-men guided the great self-students of the past who have helped so many, and will guide the great self-students of the future. There is, there must be, no pause in man's desire to observe and to comprehend that nearest, and yet most distant of problems — *himself*.

# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX A

## REASONS FOR WRITING

### Self-Study and Science

Acosta, Alfieri, D' Azeglio, Bain, Bashkirtsev, Bauer, Béranger, de Bernis, Brandès, Bray, Brydges, Bussy, Caldwell, Capel-Lofft, Cappe, Cardan, Catherine II, Cellini, Chiabrera, Cobbe, Coleridge, Comines, Crozier, Cumberland, Descartes, Dunton, Edgeworth, Erasmus, d'Épinay, Finney, Flynt, Frénilly, Ghazzali, Gibbon, Goethe, Gosse, Gozzi, Giusti, Haydon, Hayley, Ali-Hazin, Heine, Kovalevsky, Macready, Maimon, Martineau, Mill, North, Pattison, Petrarch, Quinet, Raffaello da Montelupo, Renan, S. Roberts, Rousseau, Sand, Scott, Spencer, de Thou, M. de Valois, Vico, Villeroy, Viterbi, Wallace, Wordsworth.

### Request of Friends

Balbo, Brougham, Charke, Claude, Daschkaw, Hare, Lackington, Lamartine, H. Mancini, de Retz, Ruskin, Smiles, Taylor, Vambéry, Vidocq.

### No One Else Likely To Do It or To Do It So Well

Arago, de Blowitz, Cibber, Goldoni, Hamerton, Hutton, Huxley, M. Mancini, M. Newcastle, Oliphant, Roberts. W. Scott.

### Money

Galt.

### Pride of Birth

Reresby.

### Study of Insanity

Beers.

### "To Emblazon the Power of Opium"

De Quincey.

### To Revive His Latin

Taswell.

USE OF CHILDREN OR DESCENDANTS

D'Andilly, D'Aubigné, Baber, Bewick, Blair, de Bouillon, Bramston, de Brienne *père*, Campbell, Dupré, Fanshawe, Franklin, Gilbert, Grant, Herbert, Jahanghir, Leonora-Christina, Livingstone, Locker-Lampson, Marmontel, Priestley, Pringle, Salimbene, Stirredge, Timur, Tone.

RELIGIOUS WITNESS

Alline, Ashbridge, Augustin, Bellarmin, A. Besant, Bownas, Bunyan, Cartwright, Chalkley, Clarke, Crisp, Crook, Davies, Edmundson, Ellwood, Fox, Gough, Fraser, Guibert, Guyon, Hayes, Hull, Huet, Hutchinson, Lavater, Newman, F. Newman, Patrick, Paulinus, Pearson, Prudentius, Sansom, Scott, Schimmelpenninck, Stilling, Suso, Teresa, Tolstoi, White, Whitefield, Woolman, Young.

PURELY APOLOGETIC

Abélard, Anspach, Ashe, Bruno, Cibber, Ireland, Lorenzino, "Perdita," Psalmanazar, Sorelli, Vennar.

FOR AMUSEMENT, OR TO RECALL THE PAST

Andersen, Arnauld, Babbage, Bareith, Bassompierre, Berlioz, de Brienne *fils*, Bonneval, Borulaski, Burns, Calamy, Carlyle, Casanova, Chastenay, Châteaubriand, Cheverny, Clarendon, Darwin, Delaunay, Digby, Flamsteed, Fleurange, Forbin, Frith, Gourville, S. of Hanover, Hogg, Hume, Hunt, Josephus, Kotzebue, Latude, Lejeune, Marbot, Marmont, Monluc, Montpensier, Morellet, Moore, Motteville, d'Oberkirch, Pasquier, Platter, Lord Roberts, Roland, Romilly, Shaftesbury, Saint-Simon, Trenck, Trollope, Tusser, Wolseley.

NO REASON GIVEN

Avicenna, Bagot, Bernhardt, W. Besant, Bodley, R. & W. Chambers, Clairon, de Choisy, Crabb-Robinson, Dumas, D'Ewes, Fletcher, Genlis, Georges, Gifford, Halkett, Harris, Holcroft, Holberg, Khaldoun, Kropotkin, Layard, Lilly, Lutfullah, Madame, Newton, Richter, Ristori, Rossetti, Salvini, Spohr, Southey, Symonds, Talleyrand, Du Tilly, Vasari, Whiston.

# APPENDIX B

NOTE. — To place an autobiographer in correct chronology, it is obvious the date given must be that of his death. Yet it often happens that a man may cover a certain era in his autobiography, and be therein connected with a certain group, and then live so many years after writing it that the date of his death, taken by itself, would seem to connect him with a wholly different epoch. The reader, therefore, is warned that had a strictly chronological order been kept in the following lists the result would have been hopelessly misleading. A degree of flexibility in arrangement is demanded by the very nature of the material.

## GROUPS OF FRENCH AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

[Study of French memoirs is made easy by the admirable collections of MM. Petitot and Mommerqué, Guizot, Barère, and others.]

*List I. Early Chroniclers and Precursors*

These early chroniclers are not, properly speaking, autobiographic, but follow the historical aim and method.

*Guibert* and *Abélard* (letters) are personal and subjective, but no general tendency to subjectivity is yet established.

| | *Died* |
|---|---|
| Guibert de Nogent | 1124 |
| Pierre Abélard | 1142 |
| Boucicaut | 1370 |
| Villehardouin | 1213 |
| Joinville | 1319 |
| du Guesclin | 1380 |
| Pierre Salmon | 1400 |
| Jean d'Auton | |

During the fifteenth century the chroniclers form a group in manner and method. Before the era of Henri IV, there is practically no personal study written.

| | *Died* |
|---|---|
| Enguerrand de Monstrelet | 1444 |
| d'Illiers | 1475 |
| Gui Pape | 1475 |
| Agricola [Haussman] | 1483 |
| Jean de Troyes | 1483 |
| Robert de Clari<br>Du Clercq<br>Boyvin du Villars | ab. 1475 |

*List II, containing Group I*

Those starred may be called the early military group. Purely political examples are marked with a dagger.

| | |
|---|---|
| †Olivier de la Marche | 1501 |
| *Marguerite de Valois | 1549 |
| Louise de Savoie | 1531 |
| †Du Bellay, G. | 1547 |
| †Du Bellay, M. | 1559 |
| †Comines, P. de | 1509 |
| *de Bayart | 1524 |
| *Fleurange | 1537 |
| Jean de Fabas | ab. 1550 |
| Henri de Mesmes | ab. 1550 |

| | Died |
|---|---|
| d'Antras de Samazan | 1550 |
| *Guillaume Paradin | 1558 |
| †Vieilleville | 1571 |
| *Coligny [destroyed] | 1572 |
| Claude Haton | 1582 |
| St. Auban | 1587 |
| *Blaise de Monluc | 1577 |
| †Michel de Castelnau | 1592 |

*List III, containing Groups II and III [Henri IV and Louis XIII]*

Historical, military group *
Personal, philosophical group †

[Innumerable are the *spurious mémoires*, by *Gatien Courtilz de Sandraz et de Vergé*.]

| | |
|---|---|
| *Choisinin | 1600 |
| *Villeroy | 1617 |
| *de Thou | 1617 |
| *Marolles, de | ab. 1620 |
| *Palma Cayet | 1610 |
| *Hurault de Cheverny | 1599 |
| *Brantôme | 1614 |
| *du Jon | 1602 |
| *Pierre de l'Estoile | 1611 |
| †A. d'Aubigné | 1630 |
| †Henri de Bouillon | 1623 |
| *Richelieu, Cardinal | 1642 |
| *de Sully, Duc | 1642 |
| *Henri de Rohan | 1638 |
| †Bassompierre | 1646 |
| *d'Angoulême | 1650 |
| *F. de la Tour | 1652 |
| *Père Rapin | 1669 |
| †Marie le Jars de Gournay | 1645 |
| †René Descartes | 1650 |
| *M. Merle | ab. 1650 |
| *Sirot [Letouf] | 1650 |
| *Guisquet | 1650 |
| *Gui Joly | 1650 |
| *Condé | 1650 |
| *D'Aumale et de Guise | 1650 |

*Groups IV and V [Louis XIV]*

The number of autobiographies has doubled in fifty years. The fashion has taken a strong grip on the French mind. Fifteen are subjective out of forty-four, but all of them have more subjective qualities than before.

Personal, anecdotal group *
Historical, political group †

| | |
|---|---|
| Le Châtre | 1644 |
| Guillaume Laisné | 1655 |
| *Loménie de Brienne | 1666 |
| *Tavannes, Guillaume | 1663 |
| †Conrart, Valentin | 1675 |
| Duc de Nevers | 1665 |
| *Mancini, H. | 1699 |
| Mazarin, Cardinal | 1661 |
| Omer Talon | 1652 |
| †Lenet | 1671 |
| †Montglat | 1675 |
| †Mezeray | 1683 |
| †Henri de Beauvois | 1684 |
| Turenne | 1675 |
| *L. de Brienne, *fils* | 1698 |
| Gramont | 1678 |
| *de Retz | 1679 |
| †La Tremouille | 1672 |
| †Fontenay-Mareuil | 1683 |
| *Abbé Arnauld | 1694 |
| Louis de Pontis | 1670 |
| Gaspard de Chavagnac | 1679 |
| †Duc de Choiseul | 1675 |
| †Canlet (Etienne) | 1680 |
| *Arnauld d'Andilly | 1674 |
| †La Rochefoucauld | 1680 |

| | Died |
|---|---|
| *Sophia, electress | 1680 |
| †Duc de Montault | 1684 |
| †Mme. de Lafayette | 1693 |
| †Mme. de Motteville | 1689 |
| *Mlle. de Montpensier | 1693 |
| †De Cosnac | 1708 |
| †Dangeau (Journal) | 1720 |
| †Duchesse de Nemours | 1707 |
| *Pierre Daniel Huet | 1721 |
| *Bussy-Rabutin | 1716 |
| *Jeanne de la Mothe-Guyon | 1717 |
| †Louis XIV (note-book) | 1715 |
| *Marie Mancini | 1715 |
| †Duc de Luynes | |
| †Duc de Richelieu | |
| *Lekain, actor | 1778 |
| *Mme. mère du Régent | 1722 |
| †Gourville | 1703 |

*List IV, Group VI [Louis XV]*

Pre-revolutionary group * Historical and political †

| | |
|---|---|
| †Élie Benoît | 1728 |
| *Mme. d'Avrillon | 1729 |
| †Saint-Simon | 1755 |
| †Mme. du Hausset | ab. 1755 |
| *J. J. Rousseau | 1778 |
| *d'Épinay | 1783 |
| *Duclos | ab. 1775 |
| †du Forbin | 1733 |
| *de Choisy | 1724 |
| *Morellet | 1819 |
| du Caylus | 1729 |
| *de Lauzun | 1793 |
| †d'Argenson | 1757 |
| *Staal-Delaunay | 1750 |
| *Trenck F. de | 1794 |
| *de Bernis | 1794 |
| †de Maurepas | 1781 |
| †Mathieu Marais | 1737 |
| *Clairon | 1803 |
| *Collé [diary] | 1782 |
| *Louis Claude de St. Martin | ab. 1800 |
| *Marmontel | 1799 |

Among famous *spurious* cases of this era may be mentioned

| | |
|---|---|
| Mme. du Barri | 1793 |
| Mme. de Pompadour | 1764 |
| Card. du Bois | 1723 |
| Ctsse. Lamotte-Valois | 1791 |

Faublas, following de Choisy
Ninon de L'Enclos
Marquise de Créquy

*Group VII. The Revolution*

Out of twenty-five memoirs describing the horrors of the time, only two are self-studies, and Mme. Roland is of course pre-revolutionary in tone.

| | |
|---|---|
| Durand de Meillerain | |
| Citoyen Formey | 1797 |
| Molé | 1802 |
| Besenval | 1791 |
| Barbaroux | 1794 |
| de Bouillé | 1800 |
| Mme. Campan | 1822 |
| Mme. Roland | 1793 |
| de Latude | 1805 |
| Vigée Le Brun | 1842 |
| Jean Bailly | 1793 |
| A. de la Ferronays | ab. 1793 |
| Mme. d'Oberkirch | 1803 |
| Mme. de Laferrières | |
| Gen. Dopcet | |
| Mme. de Linguet | |
| Larvet | |
| Weber | |
| Philippe d'Orléans | 1793 |

| | *Died* |
|---|---|
| Dusaulx | |
| de Molleville | all ab. 1800 |
| Rivarol | 1801 |
| Duc de Broglie | 1804 |
| de Boissy | 1798 |
| de Cartrie | 1793 |

*Group VIII. Napoleonic*

The Napoleonic *mémoires* may be divided into two classes. The purely *event mémoire*, written about Napoleon and his wars—and the *apologetic mémoire*, written because the political opinions and actions of the writer have subjected him to criticism. These are fewer, but still a definite cluster, and so are starred.

To estimate the proportion one must divide the Napoleonic Group into two sections, 1805–1850 and 1850–1900.

| | |
|---|---|
| Comte de Ségur | 1805 |
| Ney | 1815 |
| Rochambeau | 1807 |
| Riouffe | 1813 |
| Malouet | 1814 |
| du Tilly | 1816 |
| *Mme. de Staël | 1817 |
| Bourrienne | 1769–1814 |
| Fouché (d'Otrante) | 1820 |
| Mme. de Rondelet | 1820 |
| Rapp | 1821 |
| Mme. de Rémusat | 1821 |
| Napoleon's Note-Book | 1821 |
| Dumouriez | 1823 |
| Lucien Bonaparte | 1824 |
| Pils, Grenadier | 1823 |
| Prince Eugène | 1824 |
| Mme. de Genlis | 1825 |
| Sergent Fricasse | 1825 |
| Séruzier | 1825 |
| Coignet | 1825 |
| Mme. Jullien | 1825 |
| Mme. Cavaignac | 1825 |
| Chaptal | 1828 |
| Savary | 1828 |
| Frénilly | 1827 |
| *Berthier | 1829 |
| *Consul Barras | 1829 |
| Rimini | 1830 |
| Mlle. de Chastenay, Duchesse de Gontaut | 1836 |
| *Talleyrand | 1838 |
| M. Dumas | 1837 |
| Duc de Rovigo | 1833 |
| Lavallette | 1830 |
| Barère | 1841 |
| Beugnot | 1835 |
| Miot de Melito | 1841 |
| Thiebault | 1846 |
| Macdonald | 1840 |
| Grouchy | 1849 |
| d'Ouvrard | 1846 |
| Lejeune | 1848 |
| Guillon, Abbé | 1847 |
| Odillon-Barrot | 1849 |

*Group IX*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Marmont | 1852 |
| Richemont | 1853 |
| de Vitrolles | 1854 |
| Thibaudeau | 1854 |
| Marbot | 1854 |
| Général Pépé | 1855 |
| Mme. Larochejacquelin | 1857 |
| *Mlle. Georges | 1867 |
| *Guizot | 1874 |
| Queen of Etruria's Diary | ab. 1840 |

| | Died |
|---|---|
| Oudinot, Mme. | |
| Philarète Chasles | |
| Gen. de Barail | ab. 1850 |
| Mme. Mère | |
| Joseph Bonaparte | |
| Pasquier | 1862 |

The literary memoir is very prominent: although too heterogeneous to form any definite group, it yet possesses certain interesting group-characteristics, so is starred. This list does not claim to cover all the many interesting memoirs, only representative cases.

| | |
|---|---|
| Louis XVIII | 1824 |
| *Châteaubriand | 1848 |
| de Candolle | 1841 |
| *Eugénie de Guérin | 1848 |
| *P. J. Béranger | 1849 |
| Vidocq, E. | 1850 |
| Dupin (avocat) | 1855 |
| Metternich | 1859 |
| Alexis de Tocqueville | 1859 |
| *Alfred de Musset | 1857 |
| Falloux | 1856 |
| *A. de Vigny | 1863 |
| *Lamartine | 1869 |
| *George Sand | 1876 |
| M. Claude | 1865 |
| *A. Dumas | 1870 |
| Général Fleury | 1884 |
| Samson | 1870 |
| Villemessant | 1879 |
| *de Goncourt (Journal) | ab. 1890 |
| Maxime du Camp | 1894 |
| *E. Renan | 1892 |
| de Lesseps | |
| *E. Quinet | |
| *P. de Kock | |
| du Haussonville | |
| Canler | |
| *E. Legouvé | |
| Maine de Biran | all ab. 1870 |
| *Daniel Stern | 1890 |
| Gravières | 1890 |
| Sarah Bernhardt | 1906 |

## GROUPS OF ENGLISH AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

*List I, containing Groups I, II, and III*

Our first four names are those of writers whose autobiographies are brief, mere terse accounts of events, domestic or political.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Thomas Tusser* | 1580 |
| *Sir Thos. Bodley* | 1609 |
| *Richard Vennar* | 1614 |
| *Lucy Hutchinson* | 1620 |

In twenty-five years more we find a group of detailed and subjective self-studies (*), of which Blair and his friends are definitely religious.

This is a group apart from the Quakers.

The starred names (*) show the domestic record continuing, and in the hands of women. Those marked with a dagger(†) are of political and objective chroniclers merely.

Note that out of eighteen autobiographies, but six deserve to be termed self-studies.

I

| | |
|---|---|
| *Margaret of Newcastle | 1645 |
| *Lord Herbert of Cherbury | 1648 |

| | *Died* |
|---|---|
| *Symonds d'Ewes | 1650 |
| *Sir Kenelm Digby | 1665 |
| *Robert Blair | 1666 |
| †Lord Clarendon | 1668 |
| *James Fraser of Brae | 1639– |
| *John Livingstone | 1672 |
| II | |
| *Walter Pringle | 1666 |
| *Lady Fanshawe | 1680 |
| *William Lilly | 1681 |
| †Shaftesbury, Lord | 1683 |
| III | |
| †James Melvill | 1683 |
| †Sir John Reresby | 1689 |
| †Richard Baxter | 1696 |
| †John Bramston | 1699 |
| *Anne, Lady Halkett | 1699 |
| †John Bunyan | 1688 |

*Group IV. English Quakers*

The English Quakers here listed, form a continuous and compact group, running steadily, without variation in manner or method, as late as 1840.

*17th Century*

| | |
|---|---|
| John Audland | 1663 |
| Samuel Fisher | 1665 |
| Richard Farnsworth | 1666 |
| William Caton | 1665 |
| John Crook | 1699 |
| Stephen Crisp | 1694 |
| Edward Burroughs | 1662 |
| James Parnel | 1656 |
| Isaac Penington | 1679 |
| Alex. Jaffray | 1673 |
| Wm. Dewsbury | 1688 |
| Charles Marshall | 1698 |
| Frances Howgil | |
| George Fox | 1690 |
| Dr. John Rutty | |
| William Evans | |
| Alice Ellis | |
| John Wibur | |

*18th Century*

| | |
|---|---|
| Gilbert Latey | 1705 |
| Elizabeth Stirredge | 1706 |
| Alice Hayes | 1720 |
| Margaret Fox | 1702 |
| Richard Claridge | 1723 |
| Richard Davies | 1708 |
| Thos. Ellwood | 1713 |
| John Banks | 1710 |
| Wm. Edmundson | 1712 |
| Christopher Story | 1720 |
| George Whitehead | 1723 |
| Thos. Story | 1742 |
| Sam. Bownas | 1753 |
| Jas. Dickinson | 1741 |
| John Woolman | 1772 |
| Thos. Chalkley | 1741 |
| Elizabeth Ashbridge | 1775 |
| Job Scott | 1793 |
| Jas. Gough | 1712 |
| Oliver Sansom | 1710 |

*19th Century*

| | |
|---|---|
| Jane Pearson | 1816 |
| Abraham Shackleton | 1818 |
| Henry Hull | 1834 |
| Thos. Shillitoe | 1836 |
| Daniel Wheeler | 1840 |

*List II, containing Groups V and VI*

Contemporaneous with Group IV (Quaker) is the first small cluster of genuinely *scientific* self-students (*). Seven

names are similar in idea and in method, of whom the greatest is Franklin. Of the remaining names, we find four writing religious confessions wholly independent as to creed (†).

| | *Died* |
|---|---|
| Gilbert Burnet | 1715 |
| *John Flamsteed | 1719 |
| Wm. Taswell | 1731 |
| *Edmund Calamy | 1732 |
| †John Dunton | 1733 |
| *Roger North | 1734 |
| †W. Whiston | 1749 |
| Colley Cibber | 1757 |
| C. Charke | 1759 |
| Geo. Psalmanazar | 1763 |
| *David Hume | 1776 |
| Thos. Newton | 1781 |
| *Benjamin Franklin | 1790 |
| Mary Robinson | 1790 |
| *Edward Gibbon | 1794 |
| T. W. Tone | 1798 |
| W. H. Ireland | 1796 |
| *Joseph Priestley | 1805 |
| †George Whitefield | 1770 |
| †Henry Alline | 1784 |

*List III, containing Groups VII and VIII*

Imitators of Franklin and of Gibbon (*) form a defined Group from 1809 to 1826.

List III also contains a subsidiary Group (†) of literary self-analyzers — religious and introspective in tone.

Out of twenty-seven names twenty are strongly subjective, approaching the zenith of self-study in English. The list covers about fifty years.

| | *Died* |
|---|---|
| *Thomas Holcroft | 1809 |
| Rich'd Cumberland | 1811 |
| *Wm. Hutton | 1815 |
| *Rich'd Edgeworth | 1817 |
| *James Lackington | 1815 |
| *Sam. Romilly | 1818 |
| †Wm. Hayley | 1820 |
| Arthur Young | 1820 |
| *C. Cappe | 1821 |
| *T. Bewick | 1828 |
| *Wm. Gifford | 1826 |
| Alexander Carlyle | 1821 |
| Walter Scott | 1832 |
| †Egerton Brydges | 1834 |
| †John Galt | 1834 |
| James Hogg | 1835 |
| Robt. Burns | 1796 |
| †Capel-Lofft | 1837 |
| †J. Blanco White | 1840 |
| Robt. Southey | 1843 |
| †B. R. Haydon | 1846 |
| *Samuel Roberts | 1848 |
| †William Wordsworth | 1850 |
| †Leigh Hunt | 1859 |
| T. de Quincey | 1859 |
| *Ann Gilbert | 1860 |
| †Samuel T. Coleridge | 1834 |
| *Robt. and Wm. Chambers | 1871 |

*IX. Scientific Group*, 1850–1900

A clearly defined contemporary group.

*Charles Darwin
*T. Huxley
*Alexander Bain
*Herbert Spencer
*John Stuart Mill

*Alfred Russel Wallace
*C. Babbage
*Charles Bray
*Harriet Martineau
*Frances Power Cobbe
*Mark Pattison
*Edmund Gosse

*Diary*

*George John Romanes

*Later*

Frederic Harrison

*Group X. Miscellaneous Later List*, 1850–1900

The only cluster approaching a group is the *literary-artistic* formed about the Pre-Raphaelite movement. These are starred (*). Important subjective cases (†).

A. W. Trollope
†Annie Besant
Walter Besant
Lord Brougham
Lord Campbell
Mrs. E. Fletcher
W. P. Frith
†Eliz. Grant
†A. J. C. Hare
*W. Holman Hunt
Henry Layard
Col. Meadows Taylor
Lord Roberts
F. Locker-Lampson
Macready
†Cardinal Newman
*W. M. Rossetti
†M. O. W. Oliphant
*J. A. Symonds
Zerah Colburn
Lady Morgan
Geo. Harris
*Geo. Moore
U. S. Grant
Andrew White
*John Ruskin
Samuel Smiles
Lord Wolseley
†F. W. Newman
J. F. Clarke
L. Agassiz
Mrs. Charles Bagot
†John Beattie Crozier
†C. G. Finney
†P. G. Hamerton

## GROUPS OF ITALIAN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

*First Group [Roman-Christian]*

This is the first clearly defined cluster of self-students, all religious, all Christian, all subjective. Two are prose confessions and two are poems.

| | A. D. |
|---|---|
| *Aurelius Augustinus* | 354–430 |
| *Aurelius Prudentius Clemens* | 348–405 |
| *Paulinus Pellaeus* | 376–460 |
| *Patricius* | 398–469 |

*List I. Chroniclers, etc.*

The Florentines wrote personal and family chronicles as early as 1200–1300. The habit is firmly established by the 14th century, although among these early historians there is not, as yet, any self-study.

The fragments of autobiography taken from Petrarch's letters (see A. d' Ancona's Rac-

colta) are the first evidence of subjective work of any value.

Only one subjective study out of a list of ten.

| | *Died* |
|---|---|
| *Ricordano Malespini* | 1281 |
| *Dino Compagni* | 1312 |
| *Fra Salimbene* | 1284 |
| *Giovanni Diacono* | 1342 |
| *Lapo da Castiglionchio* | 1381 |
| **Francesco Petrarca* | 1374 |
| *Leon Battista Alberti* | 1472 |

In the Miscellanea di Storia Italiana, pub. at Turin, in 1862 are

*Gianbernardo Nicolo:* Cronaca.

*Cesare Nubilono:* Cronaca da Vigevano.

*Gio, Andrea Saluzzo di Castellar,* memoriale di 1482–1528.

*Group I*

The first group of self-students is starred (*). Note eight out of eleven are highly subjective.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Jerome Aléandri | 1542 |
| Francesco Guicciardini | 1540 |
| *Lorenzino da Medici | 1548 |
| *Benvenuto Cellini | 1571 |
| *Raffaello da Montelupo | 1570 |
| *Girolamo Cardano | 1576 |
| *Lodovico Cornaro | 1566 |
| Giorgio Vasari | 1574 |
| Benedetto Varchi | 1565 |

*Fragmentary*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Andrea Vesalius | ab. 1560 |
| *Nicolò Tartaglia | ab. 1546 |

*List II*

*Subjective.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Cardinal Bellarmin | 1621 |
| Cardinal Bentivoglio | 1644 |
| *Gianbattista Vico | 1743 |
| *Gabriella Chiabrera | 1614 |
| *Giordano Bruno | 1600 |
| Montecucculi, Général [war memoirs] | 1709 |

*Later*

| | |
|---|---|
| A. M. Querini | 1759 |

*Group II*

Great 18th century group. *Subjective.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Vittorio Alfieri | 1803 |
| *Carlo Goldoni | 1793 |
| *Carlo Gozzi | 1806 |
| *J. de S. Casanova | 1800 |

*Group IV. Revolutionary, ab.* 1850

* Subjective.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Giuseppe Giusti | 1850 |
| Garibaldi | |
| Massimo d' Azeglio | 1866 |
| *Silvio Pellico | 1821 |
| Marco Minghetti | |
| Montanelli | |
| Confalonieri | |
| Nerucci | |
| Gessi | |
| Tullioli | |
| Barbéra | |
| Lanza (giornale) | |
| Conti | |
| *Giovanni Dupré | 1884 |
| Hayez | |
| Marchesa Venuti | |
| Enrichetta Caracciolo | |
| Giuseppe Campanella | |
| Conte di Arrivabene | |
| Luigi Bianchi | |

| | *Died* | | *Died* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cardinal Pacca | | Viterbi, Luc Antonio | 1821 |
| Guido Sorelli | ab. 1821 | | |
| Cesare Balbo | 1844 | Tommaso Salvini | 1829 |
| Ugo Foscolo (fictional) | | Adelaide Ristori | 1906 |

## APPENDIX C

### PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS

#### Poets

Alfieri, Béranger, Brydges, Burns, Goethe, Giusti, Hayley, Heine, Hogg, Hunt, Lamartine, Locker-Lampson, Moore, De Musset, Petrarch, Rossetti, Southey, Wordsworth.

#### Novelists

Andersen, Besant, Dumas, Galt, Oliphant, Scott, Sand, Tolstoi, Trollope.

#### Historians

Abderrahman, D'Aubigné, Brantôme, Comines, Gibbon, Hume, Josephus, Khaldoun, De Thou.

#### Playwrights

Cibber, Cumberland, Goldoni, Gozzi, Kotzebue, Marmontel, Vennar.

#### Artists

Bashkirtsev, Cellini, Bewick, Dupré, Frith, R. da Montelupo, W. B. Scott, Vasari.

#### Musicians

Berlioz, Spohr.

#### Court Personages

Arnauld, Anspach, Bramston, L. de Brienne (*fils*), De Bouillon, Cheverny, Daschkaw, Delaunay, Digby, Fanshawe, H. Mancini, M. Mancini, L. de Medici, Montpensier, Motteville, Newcastle, D'Oberkirch, Reresby, Shaftesbury, Saint-Simon, Villeroy.

#### Monarchs

Augustus, Baber, Bareith, Catherine II, Cæsar, Jahanghir, Leonora-Christina, Louis XIV, Louis XVIII, Madame, L. de Savoie, S. of Hanover, Timur, M. de Valois.

PRISONERS

Kropotkin, Latude, L. Christina, Trenck.

SOLDIERS

Balbo, Bassompierre, Bussy, Fleurange, Grant, Forbin, Lejeune, Marbot, Marmont, Monluc, Roberts, Taylor, Tone, Wolseley.

STATESMEN

D'Andilly, D'Azeglio, de Bernis, L. de Brienne (*père*), Clarendon, Franklin, Gourville, Guizot, Herbert, Pasquier, de Retz, de Sully, Talleyrand.

LAWYERS

Campbell, D'Ewes, Greville, Harris, North, Robinson, Romilly, Young.

ACTORS

Bauer, Bernhardt, Charke, Clairon, Georges, Heiberg, Macready, "Perdita," Ristori, Salvini, E. Terry.

DOCTORS

Caldwell, Stilling.

FREAKS

Beers, Borulaski, Colburn, Viterbi.

ROGUES AND IMPOSTORS

Ashe, Bonneval, De Choisy, Ireland, Psalmanazar.

ADVENTURERS

Casanova, Flynt, Du Tilly, Vambéry.

POLICE AGENTS

Canler, Claude, Fouquet, Vidocq.

DIVINES

Calamy, Carlyle, Newton, Taswell.

MERCHANTS

Bray, R. & W. Chambers, Dunton, Gifford, Holcroft, Hutton, Lackington.

DOMESTIC

Bagot, Cappe, Fletcher, Gilbert, Grant, Frénilly, Halkett, Hutchinson, Morgan, S. Roberts.

### Religious

Abélard, Alline, Ashbridge, Augustin, Blair, Bownas, Bunyan, Cartwright, Chalkley, Clarke, Crisp, Crook, Davies, Edmundson, Ellwood, Finney, Fraser, Fox, Gough, Guibert, Hayes, Huet, Hull, Livingstone, Morellet, Newman, F. W. Newman, Patrick, Pearson, Pringle, Prudentius, Salimbene, Sansom, Schimmelpenninck, Scott, Stirredge, Teresa, White, Whitefield, Woolman.

### Philosophers and Scientists

d'Acosta, Agassiz, Arago, Avicenna, Babbage, Bain, Bodley, Bruno, Cardan, Cobbe, Darwin, Descartes, Erasmus, Flamsteed, Ghazzali, Hazin, Holberg, Huxley, Kovalevsky, Layard, Lilly, Lutfullah, Maimon, Martineau, Mill, Pattison, Platter, Priestley, Quinet, Spencer, Wallace, Vico.

### Writers

Besant, Blowitz, Brandès, Capel-Lofft, Chastenay, Châteaubriand, Coleridge, Edgeworth, d'Épinay, Genlis, Gosse, Hamerton, Hare, Lavater, Paulinus, De Quincey, Richter, Roland, Rousseau, Ruskin, Smiles, Sorelli, Symonds, Tusser, Whiston.

## APPENDIX D

### 1. FIRST MEMORIES

*One year.* Galt, Gosse, Richter.

*Two years.* Augustin, Bernis, Delaunay, Herbert, Hutton, Martineau, Platter, Quinet, Reresby, Roland, Sand, Spohr, Southey.

*Three years.* Bagot, Bain, Bewick, Brougham, Brydges, Carlyle, Dumas, Edgeworth, D'Ewes, Grant, Gibbon, Guyon, Hare, Holcroft, Huxley, Layard, Maimon, Marbot, Marmont, Mill, D'Oberkirch, Robinson, Spencer.

*Four years.* D' Azeglio, Cardan, Cellini, Darwin, Flynt, Goethe, Goldoni, Priestley, Ruskin, Schimmelpenninck, Taylor.

*Five years and after.* Alfieri, Babbage, Blair, Clarke, Cobbe, Dupré, Kovalevsky, Renan, Rousseau, Scott, Wallace.

*At eight years.* Casanova, Hamerton.

### 2. STRONG MEMORIES

D'Acosta, Alfieri, D'Aubigné, D' Azeglio, Bareith, Bellarmin, Béranger, Brougham, Brydges, Capel-Lofft, Cardan, Catherine II, Châteaubriand, Cobbe, Coleridge, Delaunay, Descartes, Dumas, Erasmus, Flamsteed, Fletcher, Frénilly, Ghazzali, Gilbert, Goethe, Goldoni, Hazin, Herbert, Holberg, Holcroft, Huet, Khaldoun, Kovalevsky, Lackington, Leonora-Christina, Lutfullah, Maimon, Mill, Moore, D'Oberkirch, Petrarch, Platter, Priestley, Psalmanazar, Quinet, Roland, Sand, Sophia, Southey, Spencer, Stilling, Trenck, Vambéry, Vico.

### 3. WEAK MEMORIES

Bunyan, Darwin, Galt, Gosse, Livingstone, Locker-Lampson, Marmontel, North, Pasquier, Pattison, Rousseau, Ruskin, De Thou, Trollope, Wallace.

## APPENDIX E

### BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS

Religious Studies are indicated by italics. Where possible, dates are of *birth* and *death*. In a few cases, they are of *birth*, and *termination* of the autobiography. In one or two cases, there is but a single date, used merely as a guide to the epoch of the autobiographer.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sudanese | Abderrahman Sadi el Timbucti<br>Tarik è Sudan | 1590–1626 |
| French | *Abélard, Pierre*<br>Letter II | 1079–1142 |
| Portuguese | *Acosta, Uriel d'*<br>Exemplar vitae humanae [Eng. trans.] | ab. 1623 |
| French | Agrippa d'Aubigné, Théodore<br>Mémoires de | 1550–1630 |
| Italian | Aléandri, Jerome, Cardinal<br>Journal Autobiographique [Imp. Nat. H. Omar] | 1480–1542 |
| Italian | Alfieri, Vittorio, da Asti<br>Vita, scritta da esso | 1749–1808 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| American | *Alline, Rev. Henry*<br>Life and Journal of | 1748–1784 |
| Danish | Andersen, Hans Christian<br>Das Märchen meines Lebens | 1805–1875 |
| French | d'Andilly, Arnauld<br>Mémoires de | 1589–1674 |
| English | Anspach, Margravine of<br>Memoirs, written by Herself | 1750–1814 |
| French | Arago, François<br>History of my Youth | 1786– |
| French | d'Argenson, Marquis de<br>Mémoires, et Journal | 1694–1757 |
| French | Arnauld, l'abbé<br>Mémoires de | 1616–1698 |
| English | *Ashbridge, Elizabeth*<br>Some Account of the Life of | 1713–1755 |
| English | Ashe, Capt. Thomas [probably spurious]<br>Memoirs of | |
| Roman | *Aurelius Antoninus, Marcus*<br>Meditations of | 121–180 |
| Roman-Numidian | *Aurelius Augustinus*<br>Confessions of [Patristic ed.] | 354–430 |
| Arabic | Avicenna [Ib'n Sina]<br>Autobiography [fragment]. Ed. Carra de Vaux | 980–1037 |
| Italian | d' Azeglio, Massimo<br>I Miei Ricordi | 1798–1866 |
| English | Babbage, Charles<br>Passages from the Life of a Philosopher | 1796–1864 |
| Hindu | Baber, Muhammed, Emperor of Hindustan<br>Journal of [fragmentary]. Ed. H. Eliot | 1483–1530 |
| English | Bain, Alexander<br>Autobiography | 1818–1903 |
| Italian | Balbo, Cesare<br>La Vita di [unfinished] | 1789–1844 |
| German | Bareith, Margravine of<br>Mémoires de [in French] | 1709–1748 |
| French | Bashkirtsev, Marie<br>Journal d'une jeune artiste | 1860–1884 |

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